THE MASS OF THE APOSTLES

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

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THE MASS OF THE APOSTLES

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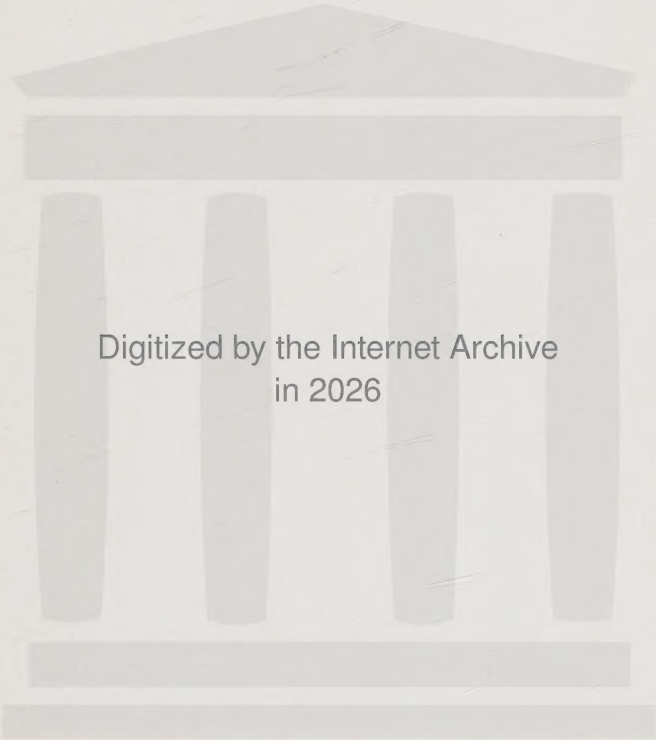
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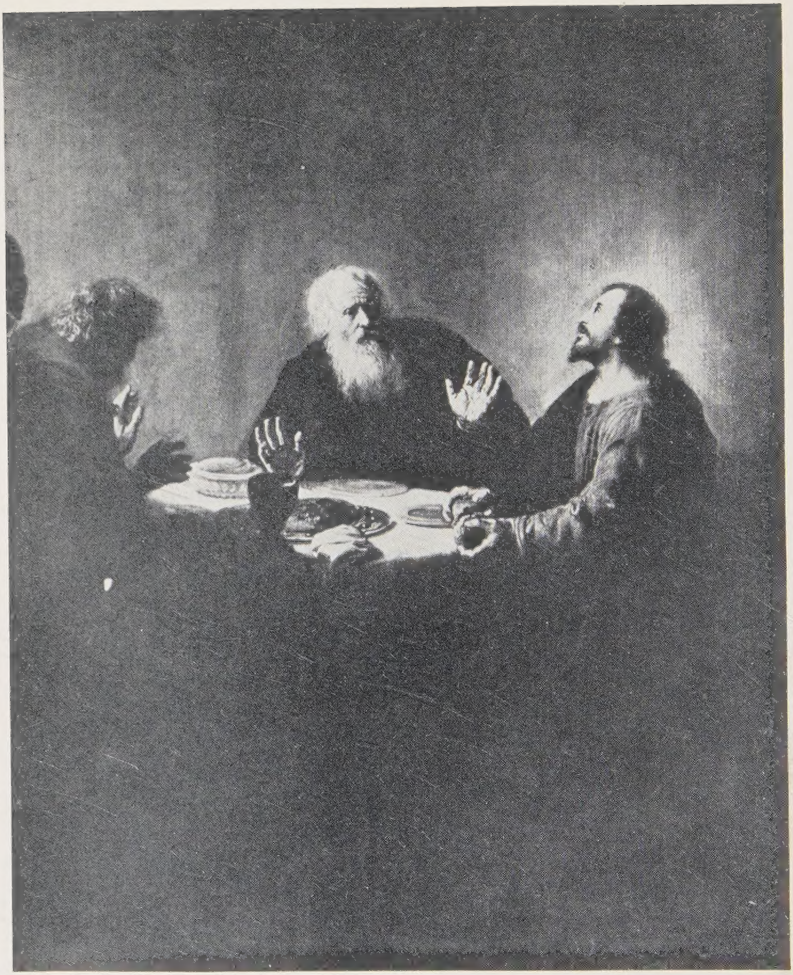

EMMAUS. *By Dick van Santvoort*

Regarded by many as the first recorded Mass after Christ's Resurrection. See Chapter: "The Breaking of Bread at Emmaus."

The
MASS OF THE APOSTLES

THE EUCHARIST: ITS NATURE, EARLIEST HISTORY AND PRESENT APPLICATION

BY

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NEW YORK
P. J. KENEDY & SONS
PUBLISHERS

Imprimi Potest:
EDWARD C. PHILLIPS, S.J.
Præpositus Prov. Marylandiæ Neo-Eboracensis

Nihil Obstat:
ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.
Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:
✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES
Archbishop, New York

NEW YORK,
September 10, 1929

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEDICATED
TO HER
WHO BORE, NOURISHED, AND OFFERED UP
THE DIVINE VICTIM,
WHO STOOD BENEATH THE CROSS
AT THE BLOODY SACRIFICE
OF CALVARY,
AND WHO,
WITH LOVE UNSPEAKABLE,
RECEIVED HER OWN DIVINE SON
AT THE UNBLOODY SACRIFICE
OF THE HOLY MASS:
MARY IMMACULATE
MOTHER OF GOD AND MOTHER OF MEN

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THE MASS OF THE APOSTLES

MASS TODAY AND IN THE FIRST CENTURY

MENTION of the word "Mass" at once summons up in our imagination a stately structure, with pillars, arches, and "storied windows," through which the sunlight beats in tints of flame. At the raised altar, before the gilded tabernacle, with the crucifix above it and the lighted candles to right and left, we behold the priest standing, his chalice uncovered and the missal open at his side. So we idealize the scene.

Our memory naturally dwells on the central figure, the priest in white, flowing alb, over which is cast the chasuble that varies in its colors with the seasons and the feasts of the year: now white, now red, now green, now violet, or again a deep funereal black, but always with the cross distinctly traced upon it.

He stands apart, raised aloft, separated from the congregation by the wide sanctuary and the long sweep of the altar rail — on another Calvary, as it were, where daily the Divine Sacrifice is again offered up, though now in an unbloody manner. These are some of the outward circumstances that most impress themselves upon the mind.

But piercing deeper, our heart and intellect rest in the Divine Mystery itself, when the words of Consecration are spoken and priestly hands lift up on high the immaculate Host.

In that instant the priest himself vanishes from sight, the candles dim to our vision, the great dome melts away in darkness and the rolling organ-peal is hushed in silence. It is God, God Himself, who has come upon the altar. With steady gaze we look upon the lifted Host, and all our being centers in that single sight, while firmly our lips repeat the prayer of our heart: " My Lord and my God! "

It is indeed the Sacrifice of Calvary once more enacted in an unbloody manner, with Christ Himself as the great High Priest, though we see Him not, and Christ the Divine Victim, albeit He is hidden from the eyes of sense, under the humble species of the bread and wine. Once more His words have come to pass: " For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed." And there, at the Communion rail, is consummated our union with Him.

Going back now to the days of the Apostles, we find the outward circumstances greatly different. So at least it must appear to us.

At an ordinary table, close to his flock, we behold the celebrant, like Christ at the Last Supper. The place is not a lofty edifice, but a simple dwelling house. No sunlight streams through the opening that serves for a window, unless it be the last slanting rays of day, for the time of the Divine Sacrifice is towards evening. The celebrant is clothed in no distinctive vestments,

but wears the common apparel of his own period. In his hands we see no disc-shaped Host, but instead a small, rounded Loaf, consecrated by him, and which he is now solemnly breaking for the Communion of the Faithful. Vividly the entire event recalls the momentous scene when for the first time bread and wine were changed into the Sacred Body and the Precious Blood of Christ, on that evening before the Master's death, as He sat in the midst of His twelve.

That in substance the Sacrifice here offered is the same entirely as the Sacrifice of the Mass today, we cannot fail to perceive at a glance. But the circumstances are all so strange to us!

Yet looking more closely on what here passes, we shall soon realize that as the essence of the Mass has never changed, so even all the very liturgies of our own time are built up on a common plan, whose ultimate origin is to be found nowhere else than at these Masses of the Apostles.

The first detail that may perhaps strike the eye is the absence of any special liturgical vestments, so familiar to us. Yet the vestments worn at Mass today are distinctive and different from the dress of our time, precisely because they come to us from the earliest centuries. They are in fact an adaptation of the clothing worn in the beginning of the Church's history, and so are reminiscent of the very vesture worn by Christ and His Apostles. More strictly speaking, however, they are adapted from the costumes of a somewhat later period, and are derived partly from

robes of special dignity and partly from garments then commonly worn by all.

Although the Sacrifice offered by the Apostles was the same as the Sacrifice offered today in our churches, yet it was not then known under the same name.

The name " Mass," now universal throughout the Western Church, is first found applied to what at present we should call the Mass proper. So at least the term was used by St. Ambrose as early as the fourth century. It occurs in a letter written by him to his sister Marcellina in which the Saint recounts to her an incident of the religious persecutions of that day.

He had just completed the first part of the Eucharistic services, he tells her, and had arrived at what corresponds to the sermon in our Sunday Mass, when he was suddenly notified that the Arian heretics had dispatched soldiers to the Portiana Basilica.

" But I remained at my place," the Saint informs her, " and began to say Mass." His words, in the original, are: *Missam facere coepi,* just as any priest might express himself today.

St. Ambrose died in the year 397. By about the sixth or seventh century the name now in use among us had already become general throughout the West. It took its origin from certain liturgical observances that call for a brief explanation.

Our word " Mass," namely, is derived from a series of Latin words: *missa, missio, dimissio,* being simply an abbreviation of the word signifying " dismissal." It thus recalls the fact that the catechumens, who were still under preparation for Baptism, were

not permitted to be present at the Divine Sacrifice, and consequently were dismissed immediately after the Gospel, or the sermon, before the Mass proper began.

There was also a second dismissal, that of the Faithful themselves at the end of Mass. Of this we still have the historic record in the words spoken by the priest at the conclusion of the Divine Sacrifice, when turning to the congregation he pronounces his *Ite missa est,* meaning: " Go, it is the dismissal."

The same expression, *missa est,* was also used in the Roman law courts when a case was over and the citizens were bidden to leave.

The fact that there were two dismissals in the early Mass gave occasion in time for calling the first part of the Eucharistic services, " Mass of the Catechumens," while the second part, containing the Divine Mysteries, was called, " Mass of the Faithful." Finally the one word " Mass " was applied to the entire Eucharistic Service. So we now use it in the West.

The dismissal of the catechumens was naturally connected with the *Disciplina Arcani,* or " Discipline of the Secret," which from an early period forbade any explicit mention of the Sacred Mysteries to non-Christians, or even to those who were still under preparation to be admitted to Holy Baptism. After referring in veiled words to the Holy Eucharist, Origen concludes: " He who is initiated in the Mysteries knoweth that I speak of the Flesh and Blood of the Eternal Word of God " (*In Lev., homil.* ix).

But the uninitiated, the catechumens, did not yet comprehend the meaning of his words.

The solemn ceremony of the first dismissal naturally brought home to both the catechumens and the Faithful the overwhelming sacredness of the Mysteries to which the former could not yet be admitted. Occurring both before the beginning and at the very end of the Mass proper, the liturgical dismissals sufficiently impressed the imagination of the people to derive from them in time our present name for the Divine Sacrifice: *Missa*, the Mass, which for centuries has been used in the Western Church.

The term for this same Sacrifice in the earliest days of the primitive Christians was in particular: "The Breaking of Bread," an expression that still retains for us much of its original beauty and significance.

The Breaking of Bread was doubtless a term employed by the Apostles themselves for the Sacrifice of the Mass. We must judge no less from its use in the Sacred Scriptures. Like the previously mentioned name it pictures for us the striking action which especially caught the imagination of the worshipers in that day.

To begin with, the element of bread recalled to the minds of the early Christians, in addition to the Mass, the miracle also of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, constantly connected by them with the Holy Eucharist. As Christ could multiply the five loaves mentioned in the great eucharistic chapter of St. John (vi), and feed with them a gathering estimated to have numbered from ten to twenty thou-

sand persons, including women and children, so He could multiply His Sacred Presence in the Eucharist in order to be the spiritual food for millions of Christians who in future years would partake of that Bread of Life.

The eucharistic significance of this miracle, however, will be more fully realized when we come to speak of it in connection with the earliest paintings of the catacombs. A specially mystic and eucharistic meaning is there attached to the combined symbols of the bread and fish, which, when found together, always allude to the Divine Sacrifice and the Holy Communion.

But furthermore, in each of the four-minute accounts of the institution of the Mass by Our Divine Lord which the Sacred Scripture presents to us, the most specific mention is made of the action which caused the first Christians to give to the Mass in their day that beautiful name of "The Breaking of Bread." Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul are all in perfect accord. To quote one will suffice for all:

"When they were at supper," says St. Matthew, "Jesus took bread, and blessed, *and broke,* and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat. This is My Body" (xxvi, 26).

In the catacombs we have various early illustrations of the small, round loaves which we know were used by the Apostles, as also of the wicker-basket, which then, in one or other way, evidently served to hold what now we would call the altar breads. Yet when the words of Consecration had been spoken

there was present under the appearance of the rounded loaf, as under the species of the small white host today, the one and selfsame Christ.

Naturally the loaves of the unleavened bread used by the Apostles were outwardly the same as the small loaves used at that time by the Jews. These were not cut at table, but simply broken, as Christ also performed the same action at the Last Supper. That action was repeated by the Apostles, as they had seen Christ do it, and as it is repeated by the celebrant today in each Holy Mass that is offered up.

It was therefore the particular action of the Breaking of Bread, which though not the most important in the Divine Sacrifice, was externally so impressive to the Apostles and their first converts, that they named after it the sacred Mystery itself. In course of time, however, with the substitution of hosts for loaves, at about the third century, this action became less notable.

Today the breaking of loaves of Consecrated Bread for the vast numbers who assist at Mass in our great city churches would be impracticable. But while small hosts are now made beforehand of fitting size for Communion by the people, the priest at the altar continues to perform the action of the Breaking of Bread, as before, with the large Host that is to be consumed by him. The action performed by Christ and the Apostles thus remains an integral part of the Mass today as in the first Christian century.

Taking the consecrated Host into his hands the celebrant at first divides it into halves. Then one half

is placed on the paten and from the other a small particle is broken off. This is then dropped into the Chalice with the Precious Blood. That traditional breaking of the Host in the Mass is now taken as aptly symbolic of the separation of the body and soul of Christ upon the Cross.

Reference to the first Consecration alone sufficed, since the second, that of the Chalice, was necessarily connected with it.

Other names for the Mass in use by the earliest Fathers of the Church were such as: "The Lord's Supper," "The Oblation," "The Sacrifice." The last of these terms was often used by Tertullian and constantly by St. Cyprian. The word "Eucharist" occurs from the beginning. Regarding this we shall have much to say later.

In the Eastern rite the exact equivalent for our expression "The Holy Mass" is, "The Holy Liturgy." Both rites are equally acknowledged by the Holy See, as practised in communion with it.

NOTE

To avoid any misunderstanding, the reader should kindly note that the word " Mass " is at times used here in its secondary, but fully recognized meaning, as indicating no more than the presence of *at least* the essentials of the Rite which Christ instituted at the Last Supper. It is a usage sanctioned in Western languages by scientific and popular writers alike, who freely speak of " the First Mass " as offered up by Christ, the " Masses of the Apostles," or " the Mass as celebrated throughout the entire world." This makes for simplicity and even for clearness.

In its technical sense the word is understood to have but one single meaning. It then applies to the Latin Liturgy only, and therefore to the Roman and Gallican rites.

Christ and the Eucharist

DIVINE PREPARATIONS FOR CHRIST'S NEW RITE

TWO thousand years before the coming of Christ, the unbloody Rite of the New Testament was by God's Providence prefigured in the equally unbloody oblation of bread and wine made by Melchisedech, King of Salem and Priest of the Most High (Gen. xiv, 18–20).

Of Christ Himself, the royal Psalmist had predicted that He should be " a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech " (Ps. cix, 4). Yet mysterious as was the priesthood of Melchisedech, that of Christ was to be far more so, for He would offer up, under the mere species of bread and wine, His own Body and Blood to the Eternal Father, in a true and mystic immolation.

But the unbloody Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, which Melchisedech prefigured by his offering, the Prophet Malachias predicted both in its nature and in the universality of its extent. Announcing the New Rite of the New Law to the Jewish priesthood he proclaimed to them in the name of God Himself:

" For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation, for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts " (Mal. i, 10, 11).

That clean Oblation, *minchah*, unbloody, as the Hebrew word indicates, was foreseen by Malachias, as offered over all the world among the nations of the Gentiles. There is but one such oblation to which the Prophet could possibly have referred. It is the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, where every moment, somewhere on the earth, the white Host is lifted up in priestly hands. The sacrifices of the Jewish priests were declared unacceptable, the sacrifices of the pagans were unclean. The Sacrifice of the Eucharist alone is offered " in every place " as an acceptable Oblation to the Lord of Hosts.

But the great type of both the Sacrifice and Sacrament as instituted by Christ was the Paschal Lamb (Exod. xii).

In the sacrificial slaying of that innocent victim, we have the symbol of the bloody death of Christ, the Lamb of God, who had come into this world to be the Victim for our sins, and whose immolation is unbloodily repeated in every Mass. But in the ritual eating of that symbolic Paschal lamb we have equally the most perfect type of Holy Communion, where the very Lamb of God Himself becomes the food of our souls.

The blood of the Paschal lamb, sprinkled over

the transom and both the door-posts of the Hebrew homes in Egypt, had virtue to avert the Angel of Death that he might pass them by and not enter there. In a far more wonderful manner, the Blood of the Lamb of God Himself was to save us from eternal death, and the benefits of that Sacrifice on Calvary were to be applied to us through the Eucharist: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi, 55).

But the special type of the Eucharist as a Sacrament was the manna that fell miraculously from heaven to be each day's food to the pilgrims in the desert. So in each day's Mass Christ is given to the Faithful for a daily food in the Holy Communion.

"Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead," Christ reminded the Jews at Capharnaum, indicating that He had something greater to give them, — "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever" (*Ib.* 49, 52).

It was there, at Capharnaum, that Christ gave the great Promise of the Eucharist, whose institution took place a year later in the Cenacle at Jerusalem.

But to strengthen the Jews for the great act of faith in Him which the acceptance of His Promise would imply, and which later the Eucharist itself would demand of them, He had worked on the previous day the stupendous miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and in the night that followed this miracle, had walked upon the waters and stilled the

storm. Thus He made plain to all that there was nothing He could not do, who was Himself the God of nature and the Giver of nature's laws. With full assurance, therefore, men might now believe that He could unfailingly fulfil whatever He would promise.

Only after this Divine prelude of miracles, following upon all the prefigurements and predictions, the types and symbols of the Ancient Law, was the great Eucharistic Promise ultimately made.

But in spite of all these most wonderful preparations, planned from all eternity, there were still many of His hearers who listened incredulously to the Divine words when He announced to them:

"The bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world."

The Jews, indeed, correctly understood that Jesus spoke in a literal sense. They, therefore, disputed among themselves, as the Scripture tells us, saying to one another: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (*Ib.* 53). But Jesus, so far from disabusing them, reaffirmed with the utmost clearness the obligation of literally eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood. Over and over, now in one way and then in another, He with infinite patience reiterated His most plain statement, so that there could be no reason left for doubt:

"Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood,

hath life everlasting: and I will raise him up in the last day.

" For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed.

" He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.

" As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.

" This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live forever " (John vi, 54–59).

There were those who said then, as there are those who seem to imply no less now, that: " This saying is hard, and who can hear it? " So St. John quotes their objection as it was made at the time. But Christ, we know, did not explain away His words. It was in all reality — and not in figure — to the eating of His true Body and the drinking of His true Blood that He referred, and St. John adds: " After this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with him " (*Ib.* 67).

He allowed them to go forever, where a single word could have held them all had He spoken only in figure or symbol.

There was just one thing that called for explanation, and that explanation Christ gave. The receiving of His Body and Blood was not to be conceived of in a material way, as many of His disciples thought. They crudely imagined they were to eat, in a carnal

manner, of His dead flesh. But this would profit them nothing, for as Christ explained: " It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life " (64).

Every true Christian knows that the Eucharist is a spiritual food, to be received in a spiritual way; that Christ is not consumed within us, but comes to us with His glorified Body and so departs — perfect as when He came — leaving in His unimpaired glory, when the species have changed under which He was truly, really, substantially present.

But that Real Presence could not be more clearly expressed than in the words of the Promise I have just quoted, and in the words of the Institution wherein that Promise was fulfilled, when over the bread Christ spoke those words of Divine power, " This is My Body," and over the wine, " This is My Blood."

To enable us to realize how the early Christians understood those words, I need but quote St. Paul in reference to the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Holy Communion.

" The Chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not *the communion of the Blood of Christ?* And the Bread, which we break, *is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?* " (I Cor. x, 16).

Here, surely, there is no possibility of mistaking the literal meaning attached by the Apostle to the words of the Saviour.

Let us then consider in detail what took place at that Last Supper, when the Eucharist was instituted by Christ, as a Sacrifice and as a Sacrament.

THE BREAKING OF BREAD. *By Professor G. Martinetti*

The action which suggested to the first Christians their name for the Mass as given in the above title.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

OF supreme importance in the history of the Eucharist is the Divine command given the Apostles: "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (Luke xxii, 19; I Cor. ix, 24, 25).

Except for these words, spoken by Christ at the institution of the New Rite of the New Law, there could now be no Eucharist, no Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, no Communion, no Priesthood.

But with those words, twice repeated on that solemn occasion, when the Old Covenant passed away and the New began, the Apostles were constituted priests. They were further given the power of ordaining other priests, a power to be handed down by them to their successors, that so the Sacrifice then instituted might never cease from the face of the earth, until indeed the Church Militant herself should be transformed into the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

"As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until He come" (I Cor. xi, 26), that is, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass shall continue until Christ's second advent, at the end of the world.

About to offer up His life for us in the Bloody Sacrifice of Calvary, Our Divine Lord, therefore, desired that this should be commemorated to the end of time in the action He ordered His Apostles to perform: "Do this for a commemoration of me." That commemoration, as St. Paul has just explained, consists in the fact that the Eucharist is, *in itself*, a showing forth of the Death of Christ. There is consequently an internal and essential connection between the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Sacrifice of the Cross.

And what is "*This*" that they were to do? It is the selfsame action which was performed by Christ at the sacred Institution of the Eucharist, the selfsame Rite, identical with His in every essential of matter and form. Not one of these might be missing, not one might be altered through all the centuries to come: "Do *this*."

It consequently embraces both the oblation of the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the Holy Mass, and the administration of the Eucharistic Sacrament in Holy Communion.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul have told us in every particular what it is that Christ then did and bade His Apostles to do. They are authentic witnesses. Matthew narrates what he himself personally heard and saw. The other Evangelists record what they minutely learned from the Apostles themselves. Thus Mark, as we know, directly received his account from St. Peter. St. Paul begins his testimony with the words: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (I Cor. xi, 23).

Their testimony, varying in expression and selec-

tion of details as that of authentic witnesses naturally will, is entirely concordant in substance. The words of Institution are given in a shorter form by Matthew and Mark; in a more amplified form by Luke and Paul. In the latter instance the sacred writers may have wished to clarify more fully the words of Our Lord.

But whatever form most perfectly records the exact words used by Christ on that occasion, all four accounts are identical in substance, expressing precisely the essential idea of the change of the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into His Blood, which in the Mass we call the Transubstantiation. "We gather from these passages," says Knabenbauer, "that the Apostles were most solicitous to give with accuracy the sense of the words of Christ, but not so the words themselves; and this is frequently observable in other utterances also of Our Lord which are related by more than one" (*In Ev. Luc.*).

I shall here parallel the four accounts, first grouping together Matthew and Mark, then Luke and Paul:

St. Matthew (xxvi, 26–28)	St. Mark (xiv, 22–24)
"And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke; and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is my body.	"And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke and gave to them, and said: Take ye. This is my body.

"And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this.

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."

St. Luke
(xxii, 19, 20)

"And taking bread, he gave thanks, and broke; and gave to them saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me.

"In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you."

"And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave it to them. And they all drank of it.

"And he said to them: This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many."

St. Paul
(I Cor. xi, 23, 25)

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: [Take ye and eat]: this is my body, which [shall be delivered] for you: this do for the commemoration of me.[1]

"In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: this chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me."

[1] The two clauses placed within the brackets in this passage are found in the Vulgate and consequently in the Douay Version. The first

Summing up what is narrated here we have the following Scriptural liturgy as first observed by Christ Himself in the institution of the Eucharist, and then followed by the Apostles in all essential details. It constituted for them, as it constitutes for us, the fundamental liturgy of the Mass proper.

Our Lord took bread, gave thanks, blessed and broke, spoke the words of Institution (Consecration), and gave to His Apostles to eat.

Our Lord took a cup of wine, gave thanks, spoke the words of Institution (Consecration), and gave to His Apostles to drink.

This is the substance of all four accounts as found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul. Reduced to their simplest form, the words of Consecration are:

" *This is My Body.*" " *This is My Blood.*"

All four witnesses, it will be noticed, add in the second Consecration the reference of Our Lord to the New Testament: " My blood of the new testament," or " the new testament in my blood." The reason why this reference occurs here in the second Consecration

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is wanting in the best Greek manuscripts and the second is not in any Greek text, or else occurs in a different tense. The first may simply have slipped into the text from a marginal gloss and is merely a repetition from Sts. Matthew and Mark. The future in the second clause is also paralleled by the future in regard to Christ's Precious Blood in the same two Synoptics. Both insertions simply fill out the sense implied in the verse. It is true that the Greek texts of all the accounts are in the present tense. A present, of course, may be used for a vivid future. But at the Last Supper the outward species of the bread was broken and that of the wine poured out. In this sense, therefore, the present could be applied to the Eucharist, while a reference to the future Sacrifice of the Cross was also included in any event.

is obvious if we turn to the account of the Old Testament or Covenant as made by God with the people of Israel, which was a Covenant in the blood of irrational victims, while the New Testament or Covenant was made in the Blood of the Only Begotten of the Father, incarnate of the Virgin Mary, who became man that He might die for us on the Cross. Of that bloody consummation on Calvary the Mass is the unbloody representation and commemoration. It is the perpetual mystical renewal of that Sacrifice on all the altars of the world to the end of time and the application of its salutary effects to our souls.

Let us turn, then, to the Book of Exodus and read its narrative of the Old Covenant made in the blood of "pacific victims":

"And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord: and rising in the morning he built an altar at the foot of the mount, and twelve titles according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, and they offered holocausts, and sacrificed pacific victims of calves to the Lord. Then Moses took half of the blood, and put it into bowls: and the rest he poured upon the altar. And taking the book of the Covenant, he read it in the hearing of the people: and they said: All things that the Lord hath spoken we will do, we will be obedient. And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus xxiv, 4–8).

It will be noticed how our Divine Lord makes

direct allusion to this passage by using words parallel with those found at the conclusion here, thus contrasting the Old Covenant with the New Testament in His Blood, which He was now establishing. "This is the blood of the covenant," reads the Old Law, and "This is my blood of the new testament," read the words of Christ instituting the New Rite of the New Law.

With the institution of that New Rite were supplanted at once and abolished forever all the sacrifices of the Old Law. In these the flesh and blood of victims had been offered as figures and symbols; in the New Sacrifice were offered the Flesh and Blood of the Immaculate Lamb of God, in whom type and prophecy were at last fulfilled.[2]

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[2] "At what precise period of the Last Supper did Christ institute His New Rite?" it may be asked here. This is a question of more than mere curiosity. The reply to it may help to answer certain difficulties that might arise.

St. Luke in his account mentions two chalices. The verses referring to the first I have not quoted in my parallel, because it seems evident that they have no allusion to the Eucharistic Chalice, but to a previous ritual chalice still belonging to the Mosaic Pasch. This ritual chalice Christ gave to His Disciples and bade them "divide it," adding: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come" (xxii, 17, 18).

That statement of Christ, which Matthew and Mark necessarily place after the Consecration, since they had not given the details of the Paschal Supper recounted by St. Luke, would clearly appear to belong chronologically where the latter places it — before the Consecration. We must, moreover, remember that Luke professes to follow in the main a chronological order, which of course is not the case with the other two Synoptics.

There were actually five Jewish ritual chalices connected with the Mosaic Paschal rite. The fifth of these, although mixed and

passed around, was not obligatory, as were the other four. It needed not to be drunk.

Now, the first chalice referred to here by Luke is thought to have been the second of the five Paschal chalices, the cup of the *Haggadah.* It followed, namely, the *Haggadah,* or account of the exodus from Egypt. This concluded with a strain of triumphal joy which might naturally have elicited Our Lord's reference to the banquet in His Eternal Kingdom, as we may best explain His words. There He would drink the new spiritual wine with His beloved Disciples and with all those who now worthily receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. So the Psalmist had sung: "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure" (Ps. xxxv, 9).

The entire eating of the Paschal lamb had to be completed before the third ritual chalice, or cup of blessings, was mixed and drunk. If, therefore, this was the chalice consecrated by Our Divine Lord, then the Consecration of the bread would have directly followed the eating of the Paschal lamb, bringing type and anti-type into closest connection. For, as St. Paul says, "Christ our Pasch is sacrified" (I Cor. v, 7). His "chalice of benediction which *we* bless" (I Cor. x, 16) is also taken as an allusion to this Jewish "cup of blessings." The fourth cup was known as "the cup of the Hallel," and there seems to be no particular reason for believing that this was made the cup of the Eucharist.

Recent scholars who hold it was the fifth chalice which Christ consecrated advance the reason that only then would the Mosaic ritual have been entirely fulfilled. But it cannot be proved that every detail of this type had to be completed. Yet their argument, too, is plausible. The probabilities, therefore, are entirely in favor of the third, or else of the fifth cup, as the chalice of the Eucharist.

But what really does matter to us is that the institution itself of the Rite of the New Law is clear beyond all doubt.

THE CONSECRATION AND THE REAL PRESENCE

CHRIST instituted the Eucharist both as a Sacrifice and as a Sacrament. Under the former aspect it is perpetuated in the Holy Mass; under the latter, it is administered in Holy Communion.

The Eucharist was instituted as a Sacrifice inasfar as at the Last Supper, by the words of the twofold Consecration, Christ represented His Body and Blood as separated. He further spoke of His Body as " given for us," and His Blood as " shed for us " (Luke xxii, 19, 20). Such a separation, together with the outpouring of blood, when offered up to God, constituted a true and real sacrifice. So alone the Apostles could view it according to their Old Testament concepts.

There, in the Cenacle, then, the infinitely Precious Body and Blood of Christ were offered up by Himself to the Eternal Father, not for the Apostles only, but " for many," and " unto the remission of sins." Particularly must Christ have had in mind all those who, by partaking worthily of His Eucharist, would thus have the merits of His Passion and Death applied to their souls, unto eternal life. Holy Mass is instituted by Him as a true expiatory Sacrifice.

The Sacrifice of the Cross was pledged and anticipated in the Sacrifice of the Cenacle. In the latter, as in every Holy Mass thereafter, the separation of Christ's Body and Blood took place symbolically, mystically, unbloodily, as I shall immediately explain, but on Calvary that separation was actual and physical. Yet in both places the Oblation to the Father and the Sacrifice itself were equally true and real. It was the bloody Immolation that was mystical in the Cenacle and actual on the Cross.

In the same manner, therefore, we rightly speak of every Mass — which simply renews what Christ did at the Last Supper — as an unbloody Sacrifice, and as repeating mystically or symbolically the death of Christ. In itself, namely, the twofold Consecration, implying by virtue of the words there spoken the separation of the Body and Blood of Christ in the ordinary course of nature, would inevitably also imply His Death.

How, then, are we to explain what here takes place at the Sacrifice of the Mass? In answering that question let us consider each Consecration separately.

By virtue of the words of the first Consecration, "This is My Body," spoken by the priest in the name of Christ, who is the only High Priest of every Mass, the Body of Christ alone is present. Such a separation of the Body from the Blood would naturally, I have said, produce death. But Christ can now die no longer.

What, therefore, is it that happens?

With the Body of Christ are present simultaneously

— by concomitance — the Blood of Christ as well, His Soul also, and His Divinity. In a word, the entire Christ has become present on the altar at the words of the first Consecration. The action which occurred merely symbolized the separation of Body and Blood. In brief, Christ's Death has been represented " mystically." The Sacrifice remains " unbloody."

A similar action now repeats itself at the second Consecration.

By virtue of the words themselves: " This is the Chalice of My Blood," the Blood of Christ alone becomes present, but *by concomitance* are present also the Body, the Soul and the Divinity of Our Lord — the entire Christ as before — because all these are now forever inseparable.

Thus, under each form, the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Saviour, is wholly and entirely upon the altar. Hence also we have a most important conclusion in the bearing of this truth on the Eucharist as a Sacrament.

Since Jesus Christ is present entirely, Body and Blood, under each species, whether of the bread or wine, it is evident at once that we cannot receive more under both species than under one. Hence, the laity by receiving Holy Communion under one form satisfy fully the obligation imposed on them by Christ of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood. They cannot satisfy it more perfectly by partaking under both. The Church today observes Communion under one form in the West and under both in the East, at the Holy Sacrifice.

In the early Church, as we shall see, the Communion of adults at the Mass was under both forms, but of infants under the form of wine alone, while outside of Mass it was administered under the form of bread alone to all alike. The Communion of the celebrant at the Holy Sacrifice must obviously be under both forms.

The Eucharistic Faith of the Church has unchangingly been the same in the days of the Apostles and in our own. But a new technical terminology, conformable to the needs of more modern times, has given a greater precision of expression to what was ever the practical faith of the ages.

To the early Christians the Eucharist was indeed a mystery, as has been justly remarked, but not a difficulty, much less a subject of controversy. No one doubted, no one questioned, any more than did St. Paul, the evident and literal sense of Christ's words.

It was unimaginable, unthinkable, to the Apostolic Christians, and equally to those of all the subsequent centuries included in the patristic era, that any one could deny the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and yet claim to be a Christian. Of all the numerous heresies which arose during that entire period, not one ever specifically denied the Real Presence, even when their false doctrines logically demanded such a denial. The very Docetæ celebrated at least their own Eucharist and interpreted the words of Christ literally.

No greater anachronism, therefore, can well be possible than to assign modern controversial meanings

to such words as " sign," " symbol," " type," or " figure," whenever used by the Fathers in connection with the Eucharist. To them the bread and wine were indeed signs and symbols, but of the underlying reality of the Eucharist, which they all alike held to be the Body and Blood of Christ.

Allegorical references to the Church or the doctrine of Christ, as His Body, were simply superadded by them to their normal teaching, which always maintained the truth of the Real Presence. Such language confused nobody, because all fully understood the unquestionable eucharistic faith of the speaker, and interpreted his words accordingly.

Needless to say there are many things in these early writers which now are hard to understand, particularly for those who have never had any intimate contact with the eucharistic belief of the Church in the first centuries and thereafter.

Thus, there arose at a rather early period the Discipline of the Secret, already alluded to, embracing all the mysteries of the Faith, but surrounding with tenfold strictness the great Mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, at which not even the catechumens might be present, and of which no profane ear might as much as hear the mention. A studied cryptic expression was therefore used regarding it, intelligible to the initiated alone. Yet that tremendous secrecy is in itself the best evidence of the belief in the Real Presence. Else why should anyone have surrounded with such unspeakable sacredness and mystery a mere figure?

Words, moreover, had not then their present technical meanings, nor was there as yet a set theology. Minor inaccuracies invariably disappeared in the course of time beneath the steady, unbroken, onward sweep of the orthodox eucharistic Faith, coming down from the days of the Apostles.

In spite, therefore, of all actual difficulties, we find belief in the Real Presence, as we shall here abundantly show, written large over the early Christian literature, history and art. It is a clear, plain, unhesitating faith.

More than this, we often find there a eucharistic realism surpassing our own. Thus Irenaeus, in the second century, speaks of the very arteries and veins, the blood and bones of the glorified Christ present in the Eucharist.

In the forceful language of the patristic writers, our bodies must make contact with the vivifying Flesh of Christ in order that the Divine ferment may leaven the mass. Without this union we shall not have life nor be raised up to glory on the Last Day, in this our flesh. Such was their plain, literal interpretation of the words of Christ, as given by St. John (vi, 55–57).

The doctrine laid down by the Council of Trent is exactly the same as that which we find so plainly expressed, although not with the same precision of terms, throughout the entire early Church. The Council says:

" In the revered Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the Consecration of the bread and wine, Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and Man, is contained

truly, really, and substantially under the species of those sensible things [i.e. under the purely outward appearance of bread and wine, perceptible to the senses]."

Still further elucidating the nature of that conversion of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, which the Council now accurately describes under the technical term of "Transubstantiation," it teaches that:

"By the Consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a conversion of the entire substance of the bread into the substance of the Body of Christ, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood."

In other words, after the Consecration, nothing whatever is left of the substance of the bread and wine, but in its stead there is present the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, under the outward accidents of bread and wine that veil them. We believe it because the Son of God has said it. "Than the Word of Truth, there is naught more true."

ST. PAUL AND THE EUCHARISTIC ALTAR

"WE have an altar," says St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, "whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle" (xiii, 10). Thus the Christian Sacrifice is contrasted with the Jewish sacrifices. Neither the Jewish priests nor the Jewish laity might participate in the "Communication of the Breaking of Bread."

But in much stronger terms the same Apostle draws the distinction between the Holy Mass and the pagan sacrifices. "You cannot drink from the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils," he writes in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. "You cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils" (x, 21).

The expression, "the table of the Lord," it may here be remarked, is found originally in that passage from Malachias which contains his famous prophecy regarding the Holy Mass, a passage to which the earliest Fathers of the Church, Irenaeus, Justin, and others, frequently refer. Today we still speak of "approaching worthily the Table of the Lord."

By the Apostle, therefore, the Eucharist is compared with the sacrifices of the Jews and with the

sacrifices of the pagans. It is presented as the one true Sacrifice in contrast to all others. He who would partake of the offerings made in this Sacrifice may partake of no other oblations, whether made in the Jewish Temple or before the pagan idols. This beyond all question defines the nature of the Eucharist as being a true Sacrifice and the only acceptable sacrifice now.

There is, moreover, a true altar, "we have an altar," says St. Paul, and this can exist for sacrifice alone. What is offered on this altar is to be eaten: namely, the Body and Blood of Christ. From these facts, therefore, the Apostle argues to the heinousness of Christians partaking in pagan sacrificial feasts and eating the meat or drinking of the cup that has been offered up to idols. For the heathens "sacrifice to devils and not to God."

But Christians, by partaking of their own Eucharistic Sacrifice, have become "one bread, one body." All namely, through the same Holy Communion, are united with each other and with Christ. Though in reality many in themselves, as the grains which make up the bread that by Consecration is changed into the true Body of Christ, they now form but one Mystic Body with Him. Here let us quote St. Paul at greater length:

"The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?

"For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread . . .

" But the things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils.

" You cannot drink of the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils " (I Cor. x, 16, 17, 20, 21).

In the various quotations here given from the Epistles to the Hebrews and to the Corinthians, we have found altar contrasted with altar, sacrifice with sacrifice. It is thus clear, beyond possibility of doubt, that the Holy Mass is a true Sacrifice. Wherever the Sacrifice was offered, there also was the Christian altar. For its celebration in the homes of the Faithful, the most becoming table would obviously be selected to serve for that purpose.

The nature of this Sacrifice itself, in which the Eucharistic Service of the Apostles culminated, has already been abundantly explained in the chapter on the Institution of the Eucharist. The function of the Apostle, or the Bishop ordained by him, was to do what Christ had done: " Do *this*."

The words and actions were to be substantially the same, and the Sacrifice was to be identically the same. There was, however, this inevitable difference, that at the Last Supper the bread and wine were changed, at the words of Consecration, into the Body of Christ that was still to be actually slain for us, and the Blood of Christ that was still to be shed in the Sacred Passion and on the Cross for the remission of sins; whereas now they are changed into the same Body indeed of

Christ, but as already slain, and into the same Blood of Christ, but as already poured forth for our salvation. Yet though slain once, He is ever living to intercede for us. Whole and glorious He is present under each Eucharistic species.

Not the Passion itself, but "the image of the Passion," as the Fathers say, is witnessed at the Holy Mass. It is, in their own words, "the unbloody renewal of Our Lord's Death by a mystery." The priest at the altar, in the famous words of St. Gregory Nazianzen, is the subordinate minister of that mystery, "using words as a sword, severing with bloodless stroke the Body and Blood of the Lord" (Ep. 171).

By the words of the twofold Consecration, as by a sacrificial knife, the death of Our Lord would indeed instantly take place at the Divine Sacrifice in that separation of the Body and Blood of Christ, which the words imply and would effect. But since Christ can now die no longer, that death — as already fully explained — can henceforth be symbolized only. It is represented and commemorated in the Holy Mass. Yet what is there offered up to the Eternal Father is nevertheless a true and real Sacrifice, the unbloody and mystical renewal of the bloody Immolation on Calvary.

Such, in substance, is that Divine Sacrifice which St. Paul describes, wherein the same Body and Blood of Christ were given then that are given now, to all the Faithful in Holy Communion. But to partake unworthily of so great and sublime a gift was truly, in

the strong language of the Apostle, to eat and drink judgment to oneself, " not discerning the body of the Lord " (I Cor. xi, 29). So, and so only, can we understand the words of St. Paul.

At each Mass Christ still remains the High Priest no less than the Victim. The human celebrant can be no more than merely the subordinate and secondary minister of this great Mystery of Faith. But Christ, as David foretold, is the Eternal Melchisedech: " The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech " (Ps. cix, 4).

The rite of Melchisedech consisted in the unbloody offering of bread and wine. In the rite of the Mass, as instituted by the New Melchisedech, we have the equally unbloody offering, but of Christ's own Body and Blood, inseparable forevermore and present under the outward species of bread and wine.

This therefore is the oblation brought to the Eternal Father on that altar of which St. Paul writes and around which the little congregation of Christians gathered, in the first years of the Church, for the Divine Sacrifice which forever replaced the sacrifices of the Old Law. Not in their own name and person did the Apostles then, or do their successors, the bishops and priests today, pronounce the sacred formulas of Consecration, but in the name only of the one Supreme High Priest, the Divine Melchisedech, are those words spoken over the bread and wine: " This is *My* Body." " This is the Chalice of *My* Blood." And by His power alone do they become effective.

"For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

"Who needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, in offering himself" (Hebr. vii, 26–27).

So in all the Masses that have ever been offered there is but one Victim, One High Priest, and one Undying Sacrifice of the Cross, ever the same yet ever offered up anew to the Eternal Father, through the hands of His Divine Son.

"It is precisely in the multiplicity of oblation," Döllinger wrote, "whereby the one ever-living Victim is offered, and the Sacrifice of the Cross constantly applied anew in its effects to the whole body [i.e. the Church] and its members, that the perfection and indissoluble power of the Sacrifice reveals itself. . . . No new immolation takes place, only that once made on Calvary is exhibited to the Christian people in a symbolic act, sensibly representing the separation of the body and blood in death" ("The First Age of Christianity and the Church," 61, 62).

But not merely as a *Sacrifice* was the Eucharist offered up in these first Christian congregations in the days of the Apostles. It was also received as a *Sacrament*. Communion by the laity is a complement of the Mass in which the Communion of the priest forms an essential part: "Do this."

THE BREAKING OF BREAD AT EMMAUS

IT is held by many that the action performed by Our Divine Lord at Emmaus, on the very day of His Resurrection, was in reality the Sacrifice of the Mass. In that case this must have been the first Mass said after the institution of the New Rite, so far as we have any evidence.

We are told by St. Luke how on that first Easter Day Christ appeared, though unrecognized, to two disciples on their way to Emmaus. He joined them on their journey and spoke to them until their hearts burned within them. Arrived at that town, He made as if He would proceed further on His way. Then the Scripture continues:

But they constrained Him saying: "Stay with us because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in with them. And it came to pass, *whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to them*" (xxiv, 29, 30).

With many eminent authorities, among the most recent of them Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, whose book on "The Real Presence" received enthusiastic praise from the Holy See, we may reasonably hold

that there can be reference here only to the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Vatican's strong approval of the work which so vigorously defends this view is sufficient for our purpose here. Intrinsically, however, the opinion recommends itself no less to our consideration.

It will at once be noted how the words placed in italics above are practically identical with those other words connected with the institution of the Eucharist, already quoted from the Gospels. Let us parallel the passage of St. Matthew regarding the Institution with the words of St. Luke concerning the events at Emmaus:

Last Supper (Matt. xxvi, 26)	Emmaus (Luke xxiv, 30)
"And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke; and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is my body."	"And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to them."

It is true that the words of Consecration, which follow the passage quoted from St. Matthew, are not given at the conclusion of the parallel passage, nor would we expect them to be repeated there, as they are not repeated in any other similar references where the Mass is clearly in question later. Thus St. Paul says: "The bread which we break, is it not the par-

taking of the Body of the Lord" (I Cor. x, 16). The word "break" suffices to imply the Consecration. So the mention of the "breaking of bread" suffices to indicate the Eucharistic Mystery, the Holy Mass.

What is therefore still more significant is the statement of these disciples themselves as reported by St. Luke. For hurrying back at once to Jerusalem they told the Eleven: "How they knew him in *the breaking of bread*" (xxiv, 35).

Now "The Breaking of Bread," as an expression used in the Scriptures and by the first Christians at the time St. Luke wrote his account, had just one special meaning, as we have seen. It signified the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass. If St. Luke had intended to give it any other meaning he would have knowingly exposed himself to an almost certain misunderstanding. This becomes all the more obvious if we consider that he himself, in the Acts of the Apostles, uses this very expression to signify the Mass in passages where there can be no doubt as to that meaning (Acts ii, 42, 46; Acts xx, 7, 11). We shall later have abundant opportunity to refer to these eucharistic passages.

It is objected by Knabenbauer in the "Cursus Sacrae Scripturae" that these two disciples were not present at the Last Supper. But this is of no consequence, since they must certainly have heard from the Apostles all the details of the Institution of the Eucharist before they set out for Emmaus. It was the last will and testament of Christ, the institution of an entirely new rite, a New Covenant in His Blood, as

He told them, which had replaced the Old Covenant. Naturally these subjects were earnestly discussed by the Apostles, as, with the Mother of Christ, they were again together after the Death of the Saviour. It was entirely to be expected that the two disciples, who stood so close to the Apostles, had heard every detail of the Breaking of Bread.

To say they recognized Our Divine Lord in the common table action, which everyone constantly performed at meals, hardly explains the text. The Breaking of Bread is obviously to be taken in the meaning which St. Luke gives elsewhere to that consecrated phrase.

It would indeed seem to me strange and confusing to read one meaning into his words here and a different meaning into the same words when used elsewhere by the same writer.

The fact that nothing is specifically said of the Consecration of the wine presents of course no difficulty. It is clearly included in the Breaking of Bread, which simply signifies " the Mass," and so embraces both Consecrations.

Allusion to the bread alone, combined with the symbolic fish which represented Christ, was the common way in which the Christians of Apostolic times referred to the Eucharist, or symbolized it in their earliest paintings. Their very name for the Mass mentions the Bread alone. Thus, too, for St. Luke the hearing of Mass and reception of Communion by the Faithful were simply " *the communication of the breaking of bread* " (Acts ii, 42). Nothing more

needed to be said. All else was understood as included. Moreover the Evangelists do not pretend to give all details in their descriptions. Even for the complete account of the Last Supper we must supply from one narrator details omitted by the other. They were not writing an itemized account, but expressed themselves clearly enough to be intelligible to their readers.

The fact therefore that the Breaking of Bread took place on the part of Our Lord can hardly have any other meaning than that He said Mass, which the disciples recognized at once from the description the Apostles had given them of this supreme event, which was obviously on the tongues of all the Eleven.

In the house of Emmaus, besides the bread, wine would naturally have been placed before the guest, as was the custom in the Orient. Courtesy demanded no less. The account of the Mass was thus entirely adequate for the understanding of Oriental readers. The hearts of the disciples burned within them on the way, and the words that Christ spoke to them, opening up the Scriptures, were a preparation for their reception of Him in Holy Communion. The Breaking of Bread completed, Christ vanished.

The time at which this Mass, for so let us call it, was said: " towards evening "; the place: a common dwelling house; the immediate preparation: recalling of the Prophecies and explanation of them; the extraordinary gifts vouchsafed: special enlightenment of the disciples by the Holy Ghost and the burning

of their hearts within them; and finally the prayers, which though not mentioned, must certainly have been said in connection with the meal — all these things, no less than the Breaking of Bread, with Consecration and Communion implied, at once present us with an outline of the Mass as it was also said by the Apostles, together with the special charismata vouchsafed at that period.

The beautiful and most credible opinion, therefore, that Our Divine Saviour further showed His love for men in the celebration of the Holy Mass on that first Easter Day, in the presence of the two disciples who had been completely stricken down and overwhelmed by the happenings of the preceding week, infusing into them new courage and giving them new strength, is one that recommends itself fully and can be freely held.

Aside from the weighty authorities of earlier times, or of Cardinal De Lai's book, with its high approval from the Holy See, there is evidently a strong modern trend towards our interpretation, as we note in such familiar exponents as Breen, who in "A Harmonized Exposition of the Four Gospels" says: "We firmly believe that Jesus here consecrated and gave the Eucharist to the two disciples. This opinion is clearly the opinion of the Fathers" (IV, 631). Or again in Semeria-Berry's "The Eucharistic Liturgy," where we similarly read: "All commentators agree in recognizing this 'breaking of bread' as a celebration of the Eucharist. The text is too clear to admit of doubt" (42). These statements regarding the uni-

versal opinion of commentators, patristic and otherwise, must not, of course, be taken too literally.[1]

On the other hand I would not wish to subscribe to the opinion expressed in the last-named volume, excellent as that work is, regarding the possibility of recognizing another celebration of the Eucharist in the incident described by St. John, when the Risen Saviour appeared to the seven Apostles at the Lake of Tiberias. To do so the words "and breaketh" would have to be inserted into the passage: "And Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth them" (John xxi, 13). Such an insertion, Semeria-Berry believed, would not be arbitrary in the light of what had been said regarding Emmaus. Yet it is a vastly different matter on the one hand to insert the essential *key* word, not found in the text, and on the other to give the practically inevitable interpretation called for by that word when actually occurring in the text.

There is no doubt, however, that the incident at the Lake of Tiberias was accepted by all the early writers of the Church as *symbolic* of the Eucharist,

[1] Mgsr. F. X. Poelzl, the Vienna University Professor of Theology, in his erudite and discerning work on "The Passion and Glory of Christ," after similarly defending the view that "we ought to understand Luke's account as referring to the Holy Eucharist," concludes with the summary: "Hence the great majority of commentators, both ancient and modern, believe that St. Luke is speaking of the Eucharist. St. Jerome says that Our Lord, by celebrating the Eucharistic Banquet at the house of Cleophas in Emmaus (which he identifies with Nicopolis), consecrated that dwelling as a church. This theory is rejected by the following Catholic commentators: Lyranus, Cajetan, Estius, Jansenius (senior, not, however, Jansenius, junior), Lamy, Schegg, Schanz, and Knabenbauer" (307).

yet this conclusion was based on another reason which shall later be fully explained in connection with the catacomb paintings.

Needless to say, it is not impossible that Christ may more than once have offered up the Holy Eucharist after His Resurrection, particularly to communicate His own Holy Mother. This latter event would not have been recorded in the Sacred Scripture any more than His obvious visit to her, the first of all, in the early dawn of the Resurrection Day. But of such further Masses we simply have no record. All was not intended to be written in the inspired Books.

Synagogue and Eucharist

HOW THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CONVERTS WORSHIPED

IN the preceding chapter we have considered what may reasonably be regarded as the first Mass after Christ's Resurrection to which we have Scripture reference. The first Masses of the Apostles themselves were not said, according to universal belief, until after the coming upon them of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Day. Of what then followed the Sacred Books have left a clear record.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read how the first converts continued *daily* "with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house" (ii, 46).

"Breaking Bread," as is sufficiently agreed upon by all responsible authorities, here means to offer up the Eucharist, or as we now express it, "to say Mass." The Apostles and the Faithful, therefore, as this passage informs us, still went into the Temple to worship God, though now in the spirit of the New Law. But they also assembled each day in various Christian dwellings for the hearing of Mass and the reception of Holy Communion.

In the Christian homes, too, was held the *Agape*, or "love feast," to which St. Luke evidently refers in the same passage when he adds: "They took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart" (*Ib.*). Of this custom we shall amply treat in later chapters.

Converts from paganism, could not, of course, return to their former temples. Strictly Christian assemblies were from the first their only opportunity for joint prayers as well as for the Eucharistic Celebration.

In regard to the place of these assemblies, A. S. Barnes holds that according to the original Greek text the first converts that had been made by the Apostles at Jerusalem went to the Cenacle itself where Christ had instituted the Eucharist.

"They went daily to the Temple for the prayers of their nation, and returned 'to break bread,' *κατ' οἶκον*, not from house to house as the 'Authorized Version' translates the phrase, nor even 'at home,' but rather 'in the house'; in that house and place, that is to say, which had been originally consecrated by the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and which now remained the normal center of its administration" ("The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments," 181).

Since, however, the very first converts, who came into the Church immediately after the preaching of St. Peter on the first Pentecost Day, numbered about three thousand, it would of course have been impossible to accommodate all in that upper room. Doubtless the Cenacle was the principal place used for this

purpose, but other private houses also must have been requisitioned for the Mass.

A number of the houses in which the first Christians met are definitely known to us. Thus in Jerusalem there was the house of Mary, thought to have been the mother of Mark the Evangelist. This, as we shall see, was probably the Cenacle itself. In Corinth there was the house of Titus. At Colossi the houses of Nympha and of Philemon were available for this purpose, while at Ephesus St. Paul made use of "the school of one Tyrannus." In Rome there was the house of Prisca and Aquila where the Christians could meet, and in fact several private houses are mentioned which were there given over entirely to the service of the Church.

But the synagogues, too, which existed in every Jewish center, were still in the beginning frequented by the Apostles. We are told, for instance, that St. Paul, going to Antioch in Pisidia, visited the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. So again we find him in the synagogues at Troas, Thessalonica, Corinth and Rome. Yet no one could have been more outspoken than he on the passing of the law of bondage and the ushering in of the freedom of Christ.

We may therefore picture to ourselves the Apostles and their earliest converts offering in various Christian homes, as well as in that sacred "upper room," the Divine Sacrifice instituted by Christ, the New Rite of the New Law, but also going up to the Temple and there singing the Psalms of David, and the

CHURCH AND SYNAGOGUE. *By M. Fürst*

The Church taking over the Ten Commandments from the Synagogue and receiving the Blood of Christ's Sacrifice.

ancient hymns of their people. These remained rightfully their own, and the Apostles could readily give to them a true Christian sense, beholding in their new Christian Faith the realization of all the ancient types and symbols.

Similarly they were perfectly free to continue frequenting the synagogues and participating in the public readings of the Scripture which were held there. In the discussions and explanations which then followed they took a leading part, making clear how the Divine Messias had indeed truly come and how all that the Prophets foretold of Him was perfectly fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

As a consequence new converts constantly came into the Fold, but on the other hand this preaching also aroused the animosity of the Jews, who finally cast the Christians out of the synagogues, or even had them scourged by the synagogue officials appointed for that task. Thus we read how the Apostles were called before a solemn council where the high priest told them:

"Commanding we commanded you, that you should not teach in this name; and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us" (Acts v, 28).

But Peter and the Apostles answered them simply and definitely: "We ought to obey God, rather than men."

After a final deliberation whether they should put the Apostles to death, against which they were per-

suaded by Gamaliel, the council called them back, having first ordered them to be scourged:

"And calling in the apostles, after they had scourged them, they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus; and they dismissed them.

"And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

"And every day they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus" (Acts v, 40, 41, 42).

At last Temple and synagogue were definitely abandoned and left to their fate, but the synagogue liturgy continued providentially to serve its purpose in the new Church.

Synagogues were very numerous. According to the Jewish Doctors a congregation of ten persons sufficed for the establishment of one. The Talmud statement that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem alone is possibly an exaggeration, yet on the other hand there is no doubt that the number was very considerable. It is not impossible that here or there an entire synagogue may have become Christian. In that case such buildings might have been used, like the Cenacle, for the Breaking of Bread. But this, if it ever took place, must at best have been exceedingly rare, and private dwellings, as we have seen, were constantly made available, in which the Christians could meet for their "communication of the breaking of bread."

It was under the last phrase that St. Luke in the

Acts of the Apostles described the hearing of Mass and reception of Communion by the Faithful. The text, already referred to before, reads:

" And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers " (Acts ii, 42).

This passage is very significant in that it shows how perseverance in the Faith, and constant hearing of Mass and reception of Holy Communion, are mentioned in the same breath.

Allusion is made in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, as we have seen, to the " daily " Mass and Communion of the Faithful at that time. Later we find specific references to the Sunday Mass and Communion. One thing is certain: that no one ever attended Mass on any day without receiving Communion.

That the Mass, offered in the houses of the first Christians, in the Cenacle, in the catacombs, or in our modern churches of today, is ever essentially the same, need hardly be repeated here.

The Mass continues and will continue, as Christ instituted it, no matter whether it be St. John offering up the Sacred Oblation, with the Mother of Christ receiving from his hands her own Divine Son in the Communication of the Breaking of Bread; or whether it be the Supreme Pontiff, lifting up, under the spreading dome of St. Peter's, the consecrated Host; or whether, in fine, it be the last priest himself, who with trembling lips will recite for the last time the sacred words of Institution at the consummation of

the world. It is ever the same Sacrifice, following in all its essentials the one supreme rubric divinely given: "Do this."

But when now we come to those liturgical ceremonies that are not essential to the Sacrifice of the Mass as such, we shall find a considerable latitude and variety. Yet even here, however, we shall notice from the first a harmony that runs through them all. The outline of a common master plan can be perceived in them that ultimately goes back to the days of the Apostles.

THE SYNAGOGUES IN APOSTOLIC TIMES

I HAVE fully described all that belongs to the essence and integrity of the Divine Sacrifice as instituted by Christ at the Last Supper.

But from the earliest times this New Rite of the New Law, which of necessity had at first to be practised in private Christian homes alone, was placed in a setting of other devotional exercises which *in substance and outline* have come down to us unchanged in every one of the various Mass liturgies now in existence.

How closely the Apostles may at first have confined themselves to the simple Rite as performed by Christ Himself at its institution, we cannot say. So long as they and their first converts from Judaism still attended the Temple each day, and then, in the evening, met for the *Agape* and Holy Mass, the liturgy connected with the Divine Sacrifice may have been very simple. They made sure above all of one thing: that the actions performed by Christ at the Last Supper were minutely followed in every essential detail. Without these there could be no Mass.

It was different, however, when now the Apostles no longer frequented either Temple or synagogue.

From the former they had at once abstained so far as the ritual sacrifices were concerned. These had forever been abolished and replaced, as a Divine institution by the New Covenant in the Blood of Christ. But the ordinary prayers in the Temple and the regular synagogue services apparently supplied what was desired by them for their religious practices over and above the New Rite of the Mass.

About the latter their entire life revolved. The Breaking of Bread, the Holy Mass, was then, as now, the center of all Christian worship, the heart of Christianity. Here Christ was recognized as truly present, and truly giving Himself to His own in every Holy Communion.

The rupture between Church and Synagogue, so far as these represent respectively the New and Old Law, the Christian fulfilment and the ancient symbols, had in reality taken place at the Last Supper. The ultimate severance in the external community of prayer, which was still to follow, implied no further violence, aside from the bitter animosity and the persecutions incited by the Synagogue authorities.

Yet, in leaving the synagogue buildings to the Jews, the Apostles and first converts took with them what alone was of lasting value, the synagogue worship. This, being without any sacrificial rites, strictly belonged to them and was directed to the One True God. It needed only to be properly changed and adapted in order to form a fitting introduction to the New Rite which Christ had given them, the Holy Mass.

Containing no sacrifice, the synagogue service was in all truth a Divine provision made to supply a perfect setting for the New Rite instituted by Christ. Our Divine Lord Himself had said He did not come to destroy but to fulfil. Thus the Bible still belonged to the new Christian converts as also did the Ten Commandments given on Mount Sinai. It was entirely fitting, therefore, that in their liturgy they should preserve with becoming freedom, the ancient religious practices which were not mere figures, types and symbols of what had now gone into fulfilment. Such precisely were the synagogue services.

Newly baptized, as it were, and Christianized for that worship in spirit and truth which Christ had instituted, these practices were to form for all future ages an integral part of the Mass liturgy, the fitting prelude of the Mass proper.

Naturally it was quite possible for the first converts to hold their newly adapted Christianized services independently of the Mass. So in the beginning they had attended them in the synagogues as a separate devotional exercise. In their own homes they consequently might either hold them separately, or else combine them into one religious ceremony with their New Rite. Certain it is that synagogue service and Mass proper became more and more closely united, and finally formed an invariable combination, as remains the case to the present day. Different as our Mass liturgy and that of the Eastern rites may appear, they are both derived from this same source:

the combination of the Synagogue service with the New Rite as instituted by Christ.

It will be best, therefore, to begin our study by describing in detail the original synagogue worship itself as it was practised in the time of Christ.

According to the Jewish *Mishna* its chief parts can be comprised under three headings: prayer, reading, and blessing.

First came the recitation of the *Shema* or prayers. It was in reality both a confession of faith in the True God and a series of prayers.

The Jews under the Old Dispensation, wherever their synagogues might be, prayed standing, with uplifted arms, and facing toward Jerusalem. This meant for them facing toward the Holy of Holies in the Great Temple, whose veil was to be rent in two at the death of Christ.

The official prayers in the synagogue might be said by any one whom the ruler of the synagogue, the *archisynagogus*, would call upon. The one who was thus to lead in prayer took his place before the chest in which the rolls, or as we now say, the books of the Law, were preserved. In the Christian service the Apostles, or whoever else had received ordination from them, would publicly pronounce the prayers. Yet it is not excluded, I presume, that others also might be appointed to do so, especially if these services should have been held apart from the Mass.

In addition to the prayers was, of course, the singing or recitation of psalms. These were accompanied by instrumental music in the Temple, but we have no

evidence that a similar practice was ever followed in the synagogues. Trombones and trumpets, we know, were used there — the former on the first day of the year, the latter on feast days.

In the second place I mentioned the reading. This consisted of more or less numerous lections from the Law (*Thorah*, i.e. the Pentateuch) and from the Prophets. It was followed by the " teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath day," with which we are so familiar from the New Testament.

In the Acts of the Apostles we see how the reading of the Law was followed also by a further reading of the Prophets. Thus we are told of Paul and his companion, Barnabas, that after passing through Perge they came to Antioch in Pisidia. The text then continues:

" And entering into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, they sat down. And after *the reading of the law and the prophets*, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying: Ye men, brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to make to the people, speak " (xiii, 14, 15).

This is a graphic description of what took place at the Sabbath synagogue services in connection with the Scripture reading.

The *archisynagogus* — in this case there were several functioning as such — not merely made the appointments for prayer, but also for the reading and preaching. Thus Paul and Barnabas were invited to speak by " the rulers " of this doubtless very important Antiochean synagogue.

On entering they had both seated themselves in that portion of the synagogue known as " the holy church " where the congregation gathered. They were now called up into the open space, at the western end of the building, where they must have taken their place at the usual desk or table. This portion of the edifice was likely to be somewhat elevated above the rest and was therefore styled the " Temple," after the Great Temple in Jerusalem.

On this tribune, as we may call it, stood the reading desk, and a special officer was appointed to take the scrolls of the Sacred Scripture out of their closet or chest, and to return them when the various lessons had been read and translated into Greek by an interpreter. The Jews no longer understood the ancient Hebrew. When the reading was completed, the scrolls were again carefully and reverently wrapped up by the official in their linen cloths and laid away into their case. Any member of the congregation might be appointed to read the Scriptures, and in doing so it was customary for him to stand.

This portion of the service was followed by the explanation (*Midrash*), exhortation or sermon, which was often closely connected with the reading. The preacher did not ordinarily stand, but was seated. On this occasion, however, it is expressly mentioned that St. Paul stood, possibly because of an uproar, or merely to attract more attention for the important message he had to communicate to that audience:

" Then Paul rising up, and with his hand bespeaking silence, said: Ye men of Israel, and you that fear God, give ear " (xiii, 16).

The exhortation that followed in this instance was indeed such as had never before been heard in that synagogue. From what is given us in the Acts themselves (xiii, 17–41) it does not appear improbable that Paul may have begun with something suggested by the reading, as was customary, and as Christ Himself did in the synagogue at Nazareth.

This latter incident is a beautiful illustration of the exact observance of every detail of synagogue custom, as far as it is known to us. We are told of Our Divine Lord on this occasion that " He *rose up to read*, and the book of Isaias the Prophet was delivered unto him " (Luke iv, 16, 17). We notice, therefore, how faithfully He complied with the regular synagogue practice of standing during the reading of what was the Word of God. Similarly we next find Him observing the custom of sitting down during the preaching. " He restored it," namely the scroll of Isaias from which He had been reading, " to the minister, *and sat down* " (*Ib.* 20), to preach to the people as we immediately learn.

Even the details of receiving the scroll from the duly appointed " minister " and handing it carefully back to this same authorized official are minutely carried out. It is an exquisite example of how He who gave the Law and inspired the Prophets overlooked nothing that pertained to the duly authorized Divine service. It is a Scripture pearl which should not be overlooked, but deserves to be taken up and studied in all its delicate lights and shades.

One and the same person, it may be added here, might be appointed to lead in prayer, to read and

preach. The latter function is presented to us by Philo as the most important in the entire synagogue liturgy.

The third and final part of this service was the blessing. It was bestowed by a priest and the entire congregation responded at the end with the word "Amen." To give this blessing in the synagogues the priests raised their hands to the level of the shoulders, but in the Temple at Jerusalem they lifted them clear above their heads for the performance of this ceremony.

There is one synagogue practice the exact place for which it is not possible to indicate. This is the taking up of alms, which also was continued in the Christian congregations, although not necessarily after the same manner.

According to the *Mishna*, at least two members of the congregation were to take up the collection of the alms, while the distribution was to be made by three persons. Not money only, but also the natural products of the fields were thus deposited by the people, the former "in the box" and the latter "in the dish."

From the Jewish service itself, as here presented, it can readily be seen how easily and perfectly everything could be adapted to Christian use. I may add in conclusion that Jewish synagogues were preferably located outside of towns, and near river or sea, for the sake of the levitical purifications which could then be readily performed.

PRAYERS THE APOSTLES MAY HAVE SAID

OF unique interest are the formulae of certain prayers which, according to Lightfoot, were actually said in the synagogues at the time of Our Lord. It is not impossible that Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph may themselves have recited some of these same petitions, together with the Child Jesus, at their own local synagogue services. In later days the Apostles and first Jewish converts might well have retained in part and newly applied them.

They are known as *Shemoneh 'Esreh*, or " Eighteen " prayers, which were believed to have been composed and prescribed by Ezra and the Great Synagogue. Their undoubted antiquity is vouched for by the fact that they are already referred to in the *Mishna* as ancient and stable forms. On such grounds, therefore, rests the conclusion that at least some of these must have existed at the time of Our Saviour and the Apostles.

These prayers, when used, were preceded by still others, which formed with them part of what we might call the synagogue liturgy. They are filled with a peculiar beauty, tenderness, confidence and devo-

tion, which naturally must appeal to us. To give a Christian interpretation to the first of these prayers, for instance, it was but necessary for the converts from Judaism to understand the sending of a Redeemer, referred to there, as already fulfilled. It is in fact expressed in the present tense.

1. " Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the Great God, powerful and tremendous; the High God, bountifully dispensing benefits; the Creator and Possessor of the universe, who rememberest the good deeds of our fathers and in Thy love sendest a Redeemer to those who are descended from them, for Thy name's sake, O King, our Helper, our Saviour, and our Shield. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who art the shield of Abraham."

Very touching is the sixth of these prayers which any Christian might devoutly recite:

6. " Be Thou merciful unto us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed against Thee. For Thou art a God, good and ready to pardon. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, most gracious, who multipliest Thy mercies in the forgiveness of sins."

The following formula, which is the seventeenth in the original series, possesses to a remarkable degree the qualities of that introductory portion of the " Thanksgiving Prayer " in the early Church from which our " Preface " in the Mass is directly derived. It would in fact have been perfectly in place at the Eucharistic services. Formulae such as this may in-

deed quite naturally have been in the minds of the Apostles, even though unconsciously, when they poured forth their own improvised "Thanksgiving" of which much more is to be said in later chapters. Although somewhat long, the prayer is worth giving here in its entirety:

17. "We will give thanks unto Thee with praise, for Thou art the Lord our God, the God of our fathers for ever and ever. Thou art our Rock, and the Rock of our life, and the Shield of our salvation. To all generations will we give thanks unto Thee, and declare Thy praise, because of our life, which is always in Thy hands; and because of our souls, which ever depend upon Thee; and because of Thy signs, which are every day with us; and because of Thy wonders, and marvelous loving kindness which are morning and evening and night continually before us. Thou art good, for Thy services are not exhausted; Thou art merciful, for Thy loving kindnesses fail not. For ever we will hope in Thee; and for all these mercies be Thy Name, O King, blessed and exalted, and lifted up on high for ever and ever; and let all who live give thanks unto Thee. *Selah.* And let them in truth and sincerity praise Thy Name, O God of our salvation and our help. *Selah.* Blessed art Thou, O Lord, whose Name is good, and to whom it is fitting always to give thanks."

Not only could this prayer have served as an ideal "Preface" in the Masses of the Apostles — for it has all the characteristics of one — but it might still answer that same purpose in our own today if inserted

into the Mass liturgy. It in fact contains some of the very thoughts and expressions that we have continued to use from the very earliest ages. Instance the concluding words themselves.

In the copy of the eighteen prayers, preserved by Maimonides, another petition has been inserted. It is made the twelfth in the series, which thus is changed to nineteen, while the above prayer becomes the eighteenth. But nothing could be more out of harmony with the spirit of the entire series than this inserted petition.

It is worth quoting, however, as illustrating the hatred which was soon to arise against the Apostles, who, as we have already seen, were publicly scourged in the synagogue.

Many a Christian in those days may have felt the lash of the synagogue official appointed for that function, which he performed in common with other duties, and no doubt performed vigorously. As an historic exposition leading up to this prayer, let us follow the preaching of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, to which I have already referred in the preceding chapter.

For three sabbaths they spoke in the Antiochean synagogue, creating tremendous discussion. Almost the whole city attended on the third sabbath day. But this aroused the envy of the Jews and so Paul and Barnabas finally turned from them and preached to the Gentiles:

" Then Paul and Barnabas said boldly: To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God: but be-

cause you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles " (Acts xiii, 46).

Yet the matter did not end there, for immediately we are further informed:

" But the Jews stirred up religious and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas: and cast them out of their coasts.

" But they, shaking off the dust of their feet against them, came to Iconium " (Acts xiii, 50, 51).

At Iconium again the same story repeated itself. Many Greeks and Jews believed, as at Antioch, but the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and " there was an assault made by the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to use them contumeliously, and to stone them."

Paul and Barnabas, therefore, fled to Lystra in Lycaonia, and their efforts again proved very successful, but at once Jews from both the preceding cities came to Lystra and stirred up the people:

" Now there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium: and persuading the multitude, and stoning Paul, drew him out of the city, thinking him to be dead " (Acts xiv, 18).

Out of the heart then of this hatred against the Christian " heretics " and this spirit of persecution the following prayer was composed:

" Let there be no hope for them who apostatize from the true religion; and let heretics [meaning Christians] how many soever they be, all perish as

in a moment. And let the Kingdom of pride [the Roman Empire] be speedily rooted out, and broken in our days. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who destroyest the wicked, and bringest down the proud."

Neither light nor repentance is sought for the Christians, on the supposition that they were in the wrong, but utter and instant destruction. How different from this malediction is that prayer for the Jews inserted by Pope Pius XI in the Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart: " Turn Thy eyes of mercy toward the children of that race, once Thy chosen people. Of old they called down upon themselves the Blood of the Saviour; may it now descend upon them a laver of redemption and of life." How different indeed is this prayer from the original eighteen prayers themselves which invoked God's blessing upon every human being: " Satisfy the world with Thy blessings, and send down moisture upon every part of the earth that is habitable. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who givest Thy blessing to the years " (Ninth Prayer). How like a harsh note, out of tune and harmony, therefore, sounds this interpolated twelfth prayer of the days of persecution.

But what, in fine, could more beautifully express the spirit of the very prayers said by the priest himself at the altar, in his intimate intercourse with Christ before receiving the Sacred Body and Precious Blood, than the last of the original *Shemoneh 'Esreh?* In reading it we need indeed but consider the Church as the fulfilment of the Prophecies made to Israel and

see in the Faithful today God's chosen people under the New Dispensation. So considered, so applied, we shall realize fully the beauty and unction of this truly Christian prayer:

"Give peace, beneficence and benediction, grace, benignity and mercy unto us, and to Israel Thy people. Bless us, O our Father, even all of us together as one man, with the light of Thy countenance. For in the light of Thy countenance hast Thou given unto us, O Lord our God, the law of light, and love, and benignity, and righteousness, and blessing, and mercy, and life, and peace. And let it seem good in Thine eyes to bless Thy people Israel with Thy peace at all times and at every moment. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who blessest Thy people Israel with peace. Amen."

It would seem that this entire series of petitions was said completely by the one appointed to lead the congregation in prayer, and no "Amen" was answered by the people until the very end. It is interesting to conjecture that Jesus, Mary and Joseph themselves may have said "Amen" to at least some of these very prayers, especially to the last of them all.

Again let me repeat that whatever such prayers the synagogue possessed were equally the rightful inheritance of the Christians, and could be used and applied by them as might seem best. In the synagogues themselves the converts from Judaism must still have recited them during the first years of Christianity.

But what an entirely new significance would often be given to these petitions by the Judaic convert, as I have already pointed out! With what a spirit of exultation and fervor might he not recite, for instance, the tenth of that golden chain of synagogue prayers, invoking God to call into the one true Church all the sons and daughters of Israel, to lead them into the new Land of Promise, to bring them at last into the full liberty of the children of God wherever they were scattered over the four quarters of the globe! Thus ran the prayer:

"Assemble us together by the sound of the great trumpet, to the enjoyment of our liberty; and lift up Thy ensign to call together all of the captivity, from the four quarters of the earth into our land. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who gatherest together the exiles of the people of Israel."

To bring them all into the new Sion, the Church foretold by the prophets, the Kingdom established by the Divine King whose coming Isaias predicted, and of whom Jeremias, Daniel, Zacharias and Micheas had foretold most wondrous things, while David had sung of Him as the Ruler appointed over Sion — this was surely one of the first purposes of every Christian convert in attending the synagogue service. Soon Christian congregations were to spring up in almost all the Jewries scattered throughout the East as well as in other lands. To the synagogues the Apostles themselves, as we have seen, everywhere went to preach the Risen Saviour. So as

the old sacrifice had passed away, the Pure Oblation of the New Law was offered up in its stead, not indeed in the Temple as of old, but in the little Christian congregations whose first nucleus was often formed from the synagogue worshipers.

CHRISTIANIZED SYNAGOGUE SERVICE IN SCRIPTURE

WE have so far contented ourselves with the general observation that the synagogue services were taken over, as a rightful inheritance, by the Apostles and their first Christian converts from Judaism. Sooner or later they were directly connected with the Sacrifice of the Mass, to serve as its introductory part.

With the preaching of the Apostles to the Gentiles the same observances were introduced also into the congregations made up largely of converts from paganism. For these the synagogue services proved a happy medium to familiarize them with the long traditions of God's chosen people, whose place they themselves, no less than their Hebrew brethren in the Faith, were now called to hold as the new Israel under the Messianic reign, which the Prophets had so clearly foretold.

Here, in numerous lections from Law and Prophets, they heard the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament read to them at their Sunday assemblies, together with the newly written Christian documents inspired by the Holy Ghost. Here the most sublime

hymnody of the world was fully placed at their disposal, in the Davidic Psalter, perfectly answering all their needs. Here they listened eagerly to the exhortations and instructions of the Apostles themselves or the Bishops ordained by them. Here they found a copious liturgy of prayers which they could readily adapt for their own purposes. Here, in fine, was given them precisely the preparation they desired for the great climax of all their worship, the Communication of the Breaking of Bread, the Holy Eucharist.

So with their faith pure and their love ever ardent, they could live without injury in the midst of a sensuous, lascivious, cruel and heartless pagan world. From all its temptations they carefully withdrew themselves, seeking only to bring new converts into the Fold of the Good Shepherd who had so mercifully sought them out, carried them in His arms, and fed them with His own most precious Body and Blood.

What was more, these services, so beautiful for the prologue of their Mass, had been rendered sacred by the participation in them of Christ Himself during His mortal life. Unlike the Temple sacrifices, they had never been abolished, but needed only to be adapted to the requirements of their Faith, perfectly Christianized. They thus became from the very first an authorized and indispensable part of Christian worship everywhere and have remained so since through all the centuries.

The purpose of the present chapter is to find what the Scriptures themselves have to tell us of this

Christianized synagogue service, as actually in use during the time of the Apostles and under their supervision.

From numerous allusions scattered throughout the New Testament, we may infer that it was in reality followed quite closely by the first Christians. Indeed St. James (ii, 2) and St. Paul (Heb. x, 25) even apply to the Christian gatherings the very name of "synagogues," although it is rendered by the word "assembly" in our Douay version.

We may well imagine these gatherings to have opened with some such greeting from the presiding Apostle as we meet with in the opening of St. Paul's Epistles: "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. i, 7). The recurrence of these same words in precisely the same order shows them to have been a formula not unlikely to be used on such occasions, though not always in exactly the same manner.

The men attended bare-headed; the women were veiled, as St. Paul himself insisted must be done: "Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered, disgraceth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head not covered, disgraceth her head" (I Cor. xi, 4, 5).

In the first Mass picture in existence, which comes to us from the very beginning of the second century, and to which I shall refer more amply later, the one woman present distinctly wears a veil over her head. The same regulation continues to be faithfully observed in the Church to the present day.

"Therefore ought a woman to have a power over her head, because of the angels" (*Ib.* 10). A symbolic idea is expressed here by St. Paul, namely: that while woman is created as the equal of man, yet in the household the authority is assigned by God to the latter, as also in the ministry of the Church. Woman, however, "is the glory of the man." Of all this the angels, whose presence in particular at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in these religious assemblies is here alluded to, are the living witnesses.

We notice, too, that St. Paul in the passage just quoted, refers to the prayers publicly recited at these devotions. Enough has been said to show the importance attached to prayer in the synagogue services, and we cannot imagine that the Christians were less zealous in this regard than the Jews.

Prayers were not then ordinarily said kneeling, as now, but standing. The hands were not folded or clasped, but the arms were extended upward and the palms held open. The priest, in the prayers said by him at the altar, still continues to observe this tradition handed down to him from the Mass of the Apostles.

"I will, therefore that men pray in all places," says St. Paul, "*lifting up pure hands,* without anger or contention." This obviously applied particularly to the Eucharistic Services.

It was further St. Paul's desire that the Christian prayers made in public should be all-inclusive. The directions given by him to Timothy were strictly carried out in the Mass of Apostolic times, while inter-

cessory prayers continue to form a distinct part of the Mass today. The Apostle wrote:

"I desire therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in high station: that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God and our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. ii, 1–4).

But besides prayer, special attention was given to the singing of "psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles." This enumeration by St. Paul (Col. iii, 16) indicates a large Christian hymnody, partly Scriptural, partly inherited from the Jews, and partly newly composed by these first Christians. Writing to the Ephesians St. Paul says:

"Be ye filled with the holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles; singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (v, 18, 19).

Prayer and song were a natural combination, then as now, whether in public or private devotions. "Is any of you sad?" St. James asks, and then immediately counsels, "let him pray. Is he cheerful in mind? Let him sing" (v, 13). Referring to the assemblies of the Christians in the first century, and doubtless to the eucharistic assemblies especially, St. Ignatius the Martyr says: "Therefore you sing to Jesus Christ in unison and loving concord" (Eph. iv, 1).

The second part of the synagogue observances has

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already been described as consisting of reading from the Scriptures, followed by exhortation or instruction, commonly based on the reading. The same order was observed in the introductory part of complete Eucharistic services in Apostolic times.

Besides the Law and the Prophets the letters of the Apostles themselves were read in the assemblies of the Faithful from the earliest times. In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians St. Paul says: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren" (v, 27). Similarly in writing to the Colossians the Apostle, before concluding his Epistle, adds:

"Salute the brethren who are at Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in his house.

"And when this epistle shall have been read with you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you read that which is of the Laodiceans" (Col. iv, 15, 16).

St. Paul is equally solicitous about the exhortation and instruction that followed the reading. Writing to Timothy, who had been ordained by him, the Apostle bids him: "Till I come attend unto reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine" (I Tim. iv, 13).

Timothy was then Bishop of Ephesus, and the passage shows how the obligation regarding the reading as well as the preaching rested on the Bishop, who also said the Mass for the Faithful. The task of the pastor of today was then generally in the hands of a bishop.

But there is still another feature of this Christianized synagogue service, which preceded the Mass

proper, noted in the Sacred Scriptures. It is the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit under which various members of the congregation freely spoke whatever the Divine Spirit of God gave them to say. Supernatural as these manifestations were, they nevertheless called for human regulation.

Two gifts are especially instanced here by St. Paul: that of speaking in various strange tongues which the speaker had never learned, and that of prophecy. By the latter is not meant, in this connection, the foretelling of future events, but rather the inspiration of the Holy Spirit under which men exhorted the congregation and guided it in every kind of virtue.

The speaking in tongues might be understood by no one, not even the speaker himself, unless there were an interpreter. As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man heareth. Yet by the Spirit he speaketh mysteries" (I Cor. xiv, 2). It was indeed sufficient that God should understand him.

But on the other hand, aside from witnessing his inspiration and exalted devotion, the Faithful could draw no direct profit from such utterances. The gift of prophecy, on the contrary, provided for all a solid, practical instruction. "But he that prophesieth," St. Paul continues, "speaketh to men unto edification, and exhortation and comfort" (*Ib.* 3).

The Apostle, therefore, desired that the Christians should be zealous rather for the gift of prophecy than for that of tongues, and in the latter case he wished

them to pray that they might also interpret for the edification of the Faithful who hear them: " For if the trumpet giveth an uncertain sound who can prepare himself for battle? " (*Ib.* 8).

St. Paul did not depreciate the gift of tongues, which he himself possessed. " I thank God," he says, " that I speak with all your tongues," but he adds immediately that in as far as there is question of speaking in the church, before the brethren, he would prefer to speak five words with his understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue.

It is indeed a remarkable picture, which St. Paul presents to us of this early Christian congregation. " When you come together," he tells them, " every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation: let all things be done to edification " (*Ib.* 26). Definite regulations were therefore drawn up, and women were not to speak in public in the church.

Amid these spiritual outpourings the practical works of charity were not neglected, and collections were taken up for the poor. Here, too, St. Paul lays down rules " concerning the collections," that these may not interfere with his services (I Cor. xvi, 1, 2). And he tells the Romans: " It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a contribution for the poor of the saints that are in Jerusalem " (Rom. xv, 26). It was for the poor that the collections were taken up, although it is not clear at what precise period of the Eucharistic Services this ordinarily took place.

Another practice connected with these observances was the beautiful act of Christian love, known as the Kiss of Peace, given by the Faithful to each other.

" Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss," St. Paul writes in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians (v, 26). And practically the same words are used by St. Peter in his own First Epistle, which was addressed to the Christians of various provinces in which he had possibly been preaching: " Salute one another with a holy kiss " (v, 14).

Looking now over this introductory part of the Eucharistic Services in the Church of the Apostles, as described here from Scripture references exclusively, we shall find that almost every detail is still to be found in the corresponding part of the Mass today: psalms, prayers, singing, readings from the Scriptures, alms, even the kiss of peace remains and is observed in the embrace of the clergy within the sanctuary during Solemn High Mass. Only the extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit, evidently meant for the period of the nascent Church alone, have disappeared.

Eucharist in Apostolic Church

MASS OFFERED BY ST. PAUL AT TROAS

AS a practical illustration of the Eucharistic Service in the Apostolic Church, let us now take an actual view of one of the Masses said by St. Paul himself of which the Scripture gives us direct evidence in the Acts of the Apostles.

Persecution of the Christians had broken out in various places, and the Apostle was just then making a visit to Troas in Bithynia.

It was Sunday, the one day of the week in which the Christians were certain, then as now, to assemble for the Divine Sacrifice. Already the day of the Lord's Resurrection had here taken precedence of the Sabbath, for the Christians were not bound by the ritual law of the Old Testament.

The evening shadows were lengthening, and so the time for the Breaking of Bread was near at hand. Weighty motives, no doubt, would lead to a change in the hour at which Holy Mass was then said, as good reasons would arise also for other accidental changes. But the custom of morning Mass did not yet suggest itself to the first Christians, who closely fol-

lowed even the external circumstances of the Last Supper, which took place in the evening and not in the morning.

"On the first day of the week," namely on Sunday, we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "when we were assembled to break bread [i.e. to celebrate Mass], Paul discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow, and he continued his speech until midnight." (Acts xx, 7).

Naturally there was no need for the sacred writer to enter here into all the circumstances of the *Agape*, if that indeed had been prepared for the occasion, nor into a description of the customary psalms, hymns and prayers. He selected merely the purpose for which they met, the Breaking of Bread, and the one important event of the service that preceded the Mass, the sermon by St. Paul. The latter sufficiently indicates that the Christianized synagogue service took part here, since the sermon was a liturgical part of this.

It is precisely so that we ourselves would report the celebration of a Mass at which some notable visitor had preached. Passing over familiar details we would straightway mention the sermon. Here too, as will be seen, it preceded the Mass proper, forming namely the conclusion of the Christianized synagogue service. It still continues to occupy the same place in the Sunday Mass today.

St. Luke, who is the writer of the account, does not overlook what we might call the illuminations: "There were a great number of lamps," he says,

" in the upper chamber where we were assembled " (*Ib.* 8).

He adds, too, that " Paul was long preaching." It was already close to midnight and the Apostle had not yet done with his discourse. He might never again meet these Christians, and they, too, were most anxious to hear all that he had to say to them. The lateness of his discourse can readily be accounted for by the previous synagogue services, which must have taken up the earlier part of the evening.

But it happened that there was a certain young man, named Eutychus, who had taken a place on the window sill, as a young man might, and so, " being oppressed with a deep sleep " fell from the third story loft and was taken up dead. Amid the consternation caused by this accident Paul went down, and by a miracle brought him to life.

Only then, when it was well past midnight, did he celebrate the Mass proper. For St. Luke continues: " Then going up, and breaking bread and tasting [i.e. consecrating and communicating, etc.], and having talked a long time to them, until daylight, so he departed " (Acts xx, 11).

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the reference here is to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It was the day and time when Mass was certainly to be said, and St. Paul is described as " breaking bread."

Let us here once more recall his own words, which are really a commentary on this entire scene: " The *bread which we break* is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord " (I Cor. x, 16).

But in addition to the allusions to St. Paul's Mass at Troas, found in the Acts of the Apostles, it is regarded as certain that many expressions which frequently occur in his Epistles are in reality liturgical formulae, which the Apostle used in his own Holy Masses, and which he quite naturally introduces into his letters, as familiar to his hearers.

As an instance, we there meet frequently with the formula that still continues to be repeated in our own Masses of today: " for ever and ever. Amen." Linked with this, occurs a phrase that is retained by us with equal persistence: " through Jesus Christ."

The Apostle concludes his Epistle to the Romans with the exhortation to them that they turn to God, the only wise, " through Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen " (Rom. xvi, 27). So again, in his concluding chapter to the Hebrews, he prays that the God of Peace may do in them what is well pleasing in His sight, " through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen " (Heb. xiii, 21). St. John, we notice, uses practically the selfsame expression: " To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen " (Apoc. i, 6). It is obvious that this is but another liturgical clause which readily came to the tongue of these Apostles when they improvised their prayers at the altar, in the days before written liturgies existed.

Such familiar expressions, hallowed by the use of the Lord's own Disciples, were repeated by the new Bishops who had been formed under them. So they continued in use until finally they became a fixed liturgical inheritance centuries later, when written for-

FRACTIO PANIS. *Capella Greca, Catacomb of Priscilla*

Our oldest Mass picture, early part of second century. A funeral Mass in the catacomb, partly symbolical.
See pp. 279–281.

mulae replaced the more or less improvised prayers of the Masses said by the Apostles and their immediate successors.

Our *Dominus Vobiscum*, " the Lord be with you," is of course a Scriptural expression (Ruth ii, 4), " And with thy spirit " is the answer to this greeting in the Mass. St. Paul's favorite expression is, " Grace be with you." The Epistles to the Galatians and to the Philippians end with practically the same words: " The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

In the Apostolic Constitutions VIII, of the fourth century, we find a long Preface (to use our modern term) where in place of *Dominus Vobiscum*, in the introductory dialogue, the officiating Bishop uses the more extensive expression of St. Paul: " The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all " (I Cor. xiii, 13). To which the people respond in the words we still use: " And with thy spirit." Then the *Sursum corda*, " Lift up your hearts," etc., follows as today. Did St. Paul in some such way begin the " Preface " of his Mass? It is not improbable.

But there is another surmise connected with the Epistles of St. Paul which is most interesting. Attention is called to what, in various places in these Epistles, has been regarded as at least the substance of short hymns or snatches of hymns composed by the first Christians. If that is the case they might well have been used even in the early part of the Eucharistic Services over which St. Paul presided, corresponding to our introductory portion of the Mass. It

is true, however, that the Apostle does not refer to them as psalms, but as sayings.

I shall here present in their poetic parallelism three of the passages thus pointed out, casting them into our modern verse form. The first is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (v, 14):

"Wherefore he saith:
Rise thou that sleepest.
And arise from the dead:
And Christ shall enlighten thee."

The parallelism of the Hebrew poetry, so evident here, at once found its way into the Greek liturgy of the early Church through the Greek translation of the Hebrew psalms. We could have no more perfect example of this characteristic of Hebrew poetry than the following passage from the second letter to Timothy. The Apostle introduces it by the words, "a faithful saying," and then quotes it in substance at least:

"If we be dead with him,
We shall live also with him.
If we suffer
We shall also reign with him
If we deny him,
He will also deny us.
If we believe not,
He continueth faithful,
He cannot deny himself"
(II Tim. ii, 11–13).

The third example which I shall quote occurs also in a letter to Timothy and is more simple in its form:

" And evidently great is the mystery of goodness,
Which was manifested in the flesh,
was justified in the spirit,
appeared unto angels,
hath been preached unto the Gentiles,
is believed in the world,
is taken up to glory " (I Tim. iii, 16).

To the student familiar only with classical and modern poetry, the possible connection of these passages with the earliest Christian hymns may not be apparent. It will become clearer, however, if he understands that the songs of the first Christians were not composed in metrical form, like later Church hymns, but were modelled entirely on the inspired Psalms.

But there is still much more to learn from St. Paul regarding the early Christian services. I shall, therefore, discuss in the following chapter his important reference to the *Agape* in relation to the Eucharist.

APOSTOLIC LOVE FEAST AND THE EUCHARIST

THE second part of the complete Eucharistic Service in Apostolic days was known as the *Agape* or "love feast." It was apparently suggested by the Paschal meal which Christ Himself had taken with His Disciples immediately before He instituted the Eucharist, and so before the first Consecration and Communion.

This feature should not, however, be regarded as of equal importance with the Christianized synagogue services, or even as constituting an integral part of the Eucharistic Service. It was rather a transient manifestation of great beauty and charm, but in no way indispensable. We are not to presume, therefore, that the Eucharist could not be celebrated without the *Agape.*

Its place during the first century was invariably before the Mass proper. St. Luke, it is true, mentions it after the Breaking of Bread, in his brief account of the religious worship of the very first Christians at Jerusalem. "Breaking bread from house to house," he says, in reference to their celebration of the Eucharist in private homes, "they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts ii, 46).

That this latter clause is meant for an allusion to the *Agape* has been quite generally accepted, and need not be questioned. But it does not follow that St. Luke here literally observes the historic order. He may simply have wished to mention the great central fact of Christian worship, the Eucharist, and then have added as a matter of minor importance that no irregularities took place at the *Agape*, such as were later to be censured elsewhere. All partook of this feast of Christian charity with becoming joy and modesty. There was no excess, but the most commendable " gladness and simplicity of heart," in these love feasts of the earliest Judaic Christians.

Historically it is universally acknowledged that the *Agape* preceded the Eucharist during this entire century. In the following centuries the *Agape* proper, as a *liturgical* function, no longer existed, although a meal was often held after the Mass to which the same name is frequently applied. It was similarly given to meals then held in common by Christians which had no direct connection with the Eucharist at all, but were ordinarily funeral feasts. Thus we find reference to it in the writings of St. Augustine, at a time when, owing to abuses, it was just being abolished in Africa. Our own reference here is to its Eucharistic connection alone.

To sum up. The *Agape* was simply a modest repast, held in common by the first Christians. In the complete Eucharistic Service it occurred almost immediately after the Christianized synagogue service and directly before the hearing of Mass and reception

of Holy Communion by the Faithful. It was a feast of love, reminiscent of the Paschal meal which Christ Himself had taken with His beloved Disciples before bestowing upon them His Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

For this feast the individual Christians brought their own meals, but all partook of them in common, so that there might be no distinction in the matter of food between the rich and the poor. The latter were supported by the superabundance of the former, that so no one might be in want.

This, indeed, was too good and beautiful to last. Like the Kiss of Peace among the laity, it was subject to abuse, and both practices ceased at a comparatively early date. In precisely the same manner our midnight Mass at Christmas has often called for drastic legislation.

The first converts, with the fire of love burning ardently within them, indeed " took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart." But riches, then as now, frequently exercised a baneful effect on their possessors. Before long St. Paul found himself forced to issue severe reprehensions.

The abuse manifested itself at Corinth, where the rich supped luxuriously at these supposedly modest feasts, while the poor were humiliated by the contrast or even allowed to go hungry. The Apostle, in attacking these abuses, applies the expression, " The Lord's Supper," in a manner that apparently includes under it both the *Agape* and the Eucharist. The reason for this is their intimate connection here, the former lead-

ing up to the latter. Reproaching the Corinthians the Apostle says:

"When you come therefore together into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord's supper.

"For every one taketh before his own supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry and another is drunk.

"What, have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God; and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Do I praise you? In this I praise you not" (I Cor. xi, 20–22).

St. Peter and St. John were similarly obliged to reproach the rich for their intemperance so flagrantly displayed before the poor. In both cases the reference is taken to be to the *Agape*, as also in a passage from St. Jude (12). There is no ground, however, for saying that St. Paul abolished the love feasts in the early Church.

After reprehending the abuses that existed in the *Agape* at Corinth, the Apostle passes on to what was the third part in the complete Eucharistic Service of his day, the Mass proper. There is no longer question now of mere material food, as in the *Agape*, but of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Apostle wishes to show the Corinthians how unbecoming the abuse of these love feasts is precisely because of their close connection with the Eucharist which immediately followed them. Grievous sin at the *Agape* leads to an unworthy Communion, and this to eternal damnation.

Such, therefore, is the train of thought which induces him now to give his detailed account of the in-

stitution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by Our Divine Lord. The passage which directly follows his discussion of the *Agape* indicates his clear distinction between this and the Eucharist, between the ordinary food consumed in the former and the Divine spiritual food received in the latter. Here, therefore, was offered the Apostle his opportunity of writing an explicit exposition of the history and nature of the Eucharist.

" For I have received of the Lord," he says, " that which also I have delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And giving thanks, broke, and said: " Take ye and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: *this do for the commemoration of me.*"

" In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: ' This chalice is the new testament in my blood: *this do ye as often as you shall drink* [*thereof*], *for the commemoration of me.*'

" For as often as you shall eat of this bread, and shall drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come.

" Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord.

" But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (I Cor. xi, 23-29).

Nothing could be plainer than this testimony to the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass for which the early

Christians assembled, and for which the *Agape* and the preceding Christianized synagogue service were utilized as an introduction and preparation. Nothing could more clearly set forth the full truth of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the real Body and Blood of Christ, for " whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." That is true only on condition that the real Body and Blood of the Lord are there given as food and drink to the Faithful under the outward appearance of bread and wine.

In no other way, finally, can we possibly understand his conclusion that they who fail to take account of the difference between the Eucharist and other food, eat and drink damnation (" judgment ") to themselves. Distinctly the Apostle says: " For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, *not discerning the body of the Lord*." There is question therefore of no ordinary meal, but of a Divine Banquet.

In fact the Corinthians are definitely told that even their temporal disease and death itself which have befallen many of them were due to the unworthy reception of the Eucharist. " Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep " (*Ib.* 30). Yet this is only a slight thing compared to the eternal judgment with which he threatens the unworthy communicant.

We see, therefore, what a clear distinction is drawn by St. Paul between the *Agape* and the Eucharist, the purely natural food and " the Body of the Lord."

COMPLETE EUCHARISTIC SERVICE OF APOSTLES

FROM the Scripture data given in the preceding chapters we can determine with sufficient precision just what the nature of the Christianized synagogue service, the *Agape*, and the Mass proper of the first Christians was in the days of the Apostles.

The question, however, which immediately arises here is whether all these three parts were actually united into one single Eucharistic Service in the time of the Apostles, as we have hitherto presumed was the case.

That the Christianized synagogue service was ultimately united with the Eucharist in the early Church, and has ever since remained thus united in every single eucharistic rite that has come down to us and exists in the Church today, we can affirm with certainty. That both services were in constant use by the very first Christians is equally certain. Some, however, hesitate to affirm that the union between them took place immediately, as soon, namely, as the Jewish converts to Christianity ceased their attendance at the Temple in Jerusalem and at the numerous synagogues, which then existed everywhere.

No one doubts that the Christianized synagogue service could be held independently and in fact so continued to be held in certain localities until possibly the sixth century, but on the other hand, we have the confident statement of no less an authority than Adrian Fortescue that:

" There was not a Eucharist [i.e. Mass proper] at every Christian assembly, *but when it* [the Eucharist] *was celebrated it was joined to the Christianized synagogue service* " (" The Mass. A Study of the Roman Liturgy," 5).

Elsewhere, too, it is taken for granted, as quite obvious, that the Christianized synagogue service was connected with the Eucharist, whenever the latter was celebrated. Such statements may be qualified by presuming a certain liberty to have been exercised in this regard, a supposition which all these authorities would doubtless admit.

The earliest complete outline of a Mass liturgy that has come down to us dates back to about the year 150 in Rome. It was written, as we shall see later, by St. Justin the Martyr. We here find the entire Christianized synagogue service combined with the Mass. One detail only is not mentioned in regard to the former, and that is the chanting of psalms, or the singing of hymns and spiritual canticles, to which St. Paul refers. Yet that part of the ceremony we may readily take for granted. St. Justin was writing for pagan readers and merely wished to give an outline of the Mass sufficient to dispel the false and coarse suspicions which then existed regarding it. The Mass

at Rome, in St. Justin's day, followed accurately the traditions transmitted by the Apostles.

But what is more, the Breaking of Bread at Troas by St. Paul appears definitely to imply, as has already been shown, the Christianized synagogue service as its prelude. St. Luke, indeed, makes mention only of the very barest essentials which he wishes to stress, but it is sufficient for us to know, as we learn there, that St. Paul preached his sermon before the Mass proper began.

Now the sermon, to which alone St. Luke had reason to refer, was strictly part of the synagogue service. It regularly presupposed the readings from Moses and the Prophets, nor have we any reason to assume that the prayers, the chanting of psalms, or singing of hymns, elsewhere so much insisted upon by the Apostle, were here omitted. In other words we can take for granted that the prelude of his Mass was the usual complete Christianized synagogue service, of which the sermon always formed a part. The fact that after the Mass St. Paul gave another long discourse seems to make obvious beyond all reasonable doubt that the first sermon was preached in the regular course of the synagogue services.

That in the Church of Corinth the *Agape* was also united with the Eucharist and so formed part of the complete Eucharistic Service, as actually held there, is perfectly clear from St. Paul's letter to which I have previously referred. The abuses he censured occurred at the *Agape*. The Apostle immediately distinguished the material food taken there from the Body and

Blood of Christ which the same congregation thereafter received in the Eucharist. Only at the *Agape* could men feast luxuriously and intoxicate themselves, thus abusing that sacred feast of love, which was followed at once by the Eucharist, or Mass proper, where the unworthy reception meant to eat and drink eternal damnation to oneself (I Cor. xi, 29).

Just how widespread the practice of the *Agape* was in the early Church we cannot determine from the Sacred Scripture. There is, however, clear reference to it in connection with the Judaic Christians at Jerusalem, no less than with the Greek converts at Corinth. Since other passages in St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude are taken to have at least a probable allusion to it, we may conclude that the practice was sufficiently widespread.

We find it mentioned again in the "Didache," or "Doctrine of the Apostles," composed at the end of the first century, but it had already dropped out of the Mass liturgy given us by St. Justin about half a century later.

It is surely not improbable, considering St. Luke's reference to the *Agape* among the very first converts, that the Apostles, in the Masses said by them at Jerusalem, after the first Pentecost Day, should have joined an *Agape* with the Eucharist, thus affectionately recalling the Paschal meal which Our Divine Lord Himself took with His Disciples at the Last Supper, previous to the Institution of the Eucharist.

But the *Agape*, needless to say, was clearly understood to be no part of the command of Christ, "Do

this for a commemoration of me." Those words definitely applied to the New Rite only, which Our Lord then instituted. The *Agape*, on the contrary, could be either dropped or kept, as might seem best to the Apostles, or their successors. In itself it was a most Christian conception. The material and purely human love feast was combined with the spiritual and Divine Banquet, and both together were a foreshadowing of the Eternal Banquet in Heaven — the unending Communion with God. " Even the brightest days are followed by darkness," says St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, " one alone will know no setting, the day of the First and Eternal Communion in our true Home." And that Day, let us remember, was ever most vividly before the minds of those first Christians.

The question naturally arises here whether those under instruction, who had not yet been admitted into the Fold by Baptism, were permitted to attend the *Agape*.

The earliest definite information we possess concerning this class, later known as catechumens, merely makes it plain they were not allowed to be present at the Mass proper, which constitutes the third part of the complete Eucharistic Service. In the days now under discussion there was as yet no Discipline of the Secret, but it is understood that all who attended Mass also received the Eucharist, which would exclude the unbaptized. Of their attendance at the *Agape* nothing is said.

St. Paul's reference to the *Agape*, however, shows its close association with the Eucharist, so that he

passes almost imperceptibly from the one to the other. Hence it would seem the unbaptized must have been dismissed before the *Agape*, which was a material love feast preparatory to the Spiritual Banquet of Divine Love. In the earliest rites the dismissal of the catechumens took place after the sermon. They then solemnly received the blessing of the Bishop and the Mass of the Faithful began.

Of this third part of the complete Eucharistic Service nothing further need be said here than that it contained all the essentials of the Mass. Its earlier portion centered in the Consecration; its latter portion in the Communion.

In giving His promise of the Eucharist Christ had made plain that all who would heed His words must comply with His command to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood. With the Communication of the Breaking of Bread on the part of all the Faithful, the third part of the Eucharistic Service in the days of the Apostles ended.

But there was still a fourth part, if I may so call it, which can be briefly noted, and which St. Luke sums up under the one word, "prayers" (Acts ii, 42). The reference here, namely, is to the thanksgiving prayers after Communion.

Christians today conclude their own reception of Communion with intimate prayers of thanksgiving and petitions for graces and favors. If at all reasonably possible, a quarter of an hour should be given after Mass to show our gratitude and love to our Divine Guest.

Looking back over the interval of twenty centuries to those first Christians the distance melts away, and we realize there is between them and us no chasm and no separation. Time cannot divide us from one another. We have one Lord, one Faith, one Altar, one Divine Sacrifice, one ineffable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, whereof all who partake worthily have the same infallible pledge of eternal life.

THE LESSONS AND CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

THERE is one custom, of special interest to us today, which we find to have been universal throughout the early Church. It is that of congregational singing. This took place particularly between the reading of the lessons in the first part of the Mass.

I referred in a previous chapter to the Epistle and Gospel in the Holy Mass as a survival of these Scripture readings. We have here a very important historic development which must first engage our attention.

In the Jewish synagogue devotions, as held on every Sabbath throughout both Palestine and the Greco-Roman world in the day of Christ, there were not merely two but many readings. The Law or Pentateuch was divided into numerous sections, several of which were read separately on each Sabbath. The purpose was that so, within a given period, all the books of Moses might be gone over completely. In the same manner there were various lessons read each Sabbath from the Prophets — under which term the

remaining books of the Bible seem often in a general way to have been signified.[1]

To avoid monotony, therefore, and to vary the lections with devotional exercises, the recitation or chanting of psalms occurred between the separate reading.

In the Christian liturgy of the days of St. Peter this same alternation of lessons and chants was also followed. Moses, and especially the Prophets, continued to be read in numerous lessons at the Sunday services, with chanting of psalms between the lessons. Gradually, too, the Epistles of the Apostles were written and made their rounds in various churches. In course of time the Gospels appeared and were then similarly read under Apostolic authority. The Acts of the Apostles, too, were here introduced. This process inevitably lessened the number of possible readings from the Law and Prophets. At a later period the Law was even omitted, and finally, in more recent times, there were only three lessons left in the introductory part of the Mass: the Prophets, the Epistles and the Gospel.

In the fifth century the lesson from the Prophets itself was dropped, thus leaving us only the Epistle and Gospel, as now we have them.

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[1] Strictly speaking, the canonical books of the Old Testament were grouped by the Jews into three classes: *Thora* or the Law, consisting of the Pentateuch; *Nebiim* or the Prophets; and *Ketubim*, embracing the rest of the canonical Scriptures, but having reference in particular to the Psalms. Our Lord Himself observed this triple classification when after His Resurrection He said to the Apostles assembled in Jerusalem: "All these things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the *law of Moses*, and in the *prophets*, and in the *psalms, concerning me*" (Luke xxiv, 44).

In various Masses, however, during Lent and Advent, a great number of lessons are still read, as in the Apostolic times. The best instance of the Christianized synagogue service is preserved in the Good Friday devotions. These, in fact, long contained no other elements than that service, pure and simple.

The reading of the numerous lessons from the Sacred Scriptures in the time of the Apostles was indeed of the highest importance. There was then no other way of acquainting the new converts with these inspired books, for private copies of the Bible could hardly come into their individual possession, since the hand-written Scripture rolls of that day were both rare and expensive.

Of the utmost importance also was the chanting of the psalms which took place between the various lections. These psalms constitute our most ancient psaltery. The chants at the Introit, Offertory and Communion were later additions. Thus the Psalm *Judica me Deus,* which the priest recites at the foot of the altar, was introduced after the catacomb days when it was sung at the solemn entrance of the Bishop into the church. The Bishop was still the ordinary celebrant of the Mass and his processional entry was then a specially magnificent ceremony.

But all these later chants, as Msgr. Duchesne in his " Christian Worship " points out, were mainly intended to hold the attention of the people during long ceremonies, while the original psalms between the lections were for their own sake, that the people might concentrate their entire attention upon them.

With the reduction of the lessons the psalms were also reduced in number. In course of time the psalms were no longer sung entire, and today only a few verses remain between Epistle and Gospel. The first of the two small sections that immediately follow the Epistle we call the Gradual, which now occupies the place of a complete psalm. Its very name is taken from the *gradus*, or " steps," indicating the elevation on which stood the reader's desk, from which the psalms were originally sung between the various lessons. The people chanted the responses.

But the Gradual is followed immediately by another short section, the Alleluia chant, or during penitential seasons, the Tract, both of which are merely vestiges of a complete psalm replaced by them.

Thus, after the Epistle, we have the historic reminders of two entire psalms, the last of many which once were sung between the lessons. The Gradual itself represents the psalm which followed the Prophecy lesson, so that when this lesson today recurs in certain Masses, the Gradual accompanies it.

The Gradual is a *psalmus responsorius*. In the days of the Apostles the psalms, namely, were sung by a single cantor, probably with rich variations, but his chant was always combined with congregational singing, insofar as the entire people took up the final words of the chant and repeated them, or else answered with some regular refrain after each verse or verse group. The Tract, called the *psalmus tractus*, is supposed to have had a special melody of its own.

It was sung *uno tractu* i.e. without any refrain or interruption by the people.

Our present usage of the alternate singing of verses by two choirs was not in existence in the days when St. Peter said Mass. The responsory method in use then is still alluded to by St. Augustine who refers to the singing of a complete psalm after the reading of the Epistle, where the people responded to it in unison.

"First we heard the lesson of the Apostle," he writes, "then we sang a psalm, exhorting each other with one voice and one heart, saying: *Venite Adoremus*" (*Serm.* cxxvi, 1).

The psalm, namely was sung by the cantor alone, but the people sang the refrain: "Come, let us adore."

The inspired Psalms, the grandest hymnody of the world, belonged to these early Christians. And all their own original hymns, as the passages previously quoted from St. Paul have shown, were also invariably constructed along the lines of the Davidic Psalter. Every psalm there is a hymn.

The best known hymn of the early Church, which is still incorporated in the Mass of today, is the *Gloria*. It is one of the earliest of all the original Christian hymns that we possess, although its substance has been considerably altered, making it now in reality a hymn of the Blessed Trinity. It is but one of numberless "private psalms," as they are called, which were composed by the Christians of the first centuries, with the refrains, or answers, to be chanted by the people doubtless kept in view.

Incidentally it may be mentioned here that while the specific manner in which psalms were introduced into the first part of the Eucharistic Service was clearly modelled upon the Jewish synagogue service, the singing itself of these psalms may have been a feature taken over from the Temple service. It is the singing which delighted the heart of St. Paul, and he may well have joined in the hymns from which he apparently quotes.

It is believed by some that in general the recital only of the psalms took place in the synagogues. On the other hand the psalmody of the Temple was carried out by trained and select voices, with musical accompaniment of the greatest variety, and on a scale of the utmost magnificence. From the Temple, therefore, the first Christians may have drawn their inspiration for the singing of those " psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles " of which St. Paul writes, exhorting the Christians that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit, " singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord " (Eph. v, 19).

RESPONSES BY THE PEOPLE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

ALTHOUGH the prayers of the presiding Bishop in the Apostolic Age were largely extemporary, yet a customary sequence was already observed, which enabled the people to know just when and what to respond. Even the authentic utterances of those possessed of the gift of tongues or prophecy were answered by the entire congregation, as we may judge from the words of St. Paul. To such prayers the wonted reply would be, " Amen." Other ancient acclamations were: Hosanna, *Maran atha* and Alleluia.

It may seem strange that the Hebrew exclamation, " Alleluia," meaning " Praise ye the Lord," occurs in but one place in the New Testament, although the Apostolic Christians were sufficiently familiar with it from their Psalms. St. John, describing a vision granted him, tells of this cry rising from the celestial inhabitants, as from a great heavenly congregation. The scene which was shown him in a vision may well have had its earthly parallel in the first Christian congregations, insofar as the united acclamations of the worshipers were concerned.

" I heard," he says, " as it were the voice of much people in heaven, saying: Alleluia. Salvation, and glory, and power is to our God. . . . And again they said: Alleluia " (Apoc. xix, 1, 3).

In the same manner the four and twenty ancients and the four living creatures, falling down and adoring God " that sitteth upon the throne," were heard by him saying: " Amen; Alleluia." Then a voice came out from the Throne calling on all to give praise to God, on which St. John continues:

" And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying: Alleluia: for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned " (Apoc. xix, 6).

The acclamations of the first Christians in their Apostolic gatherings must have been only less inspiring than the exultant sound of that " voice of much people in heaven." There was no fear on their part to speak out freely, no trace, we may well suppose, of our modern Western reticence at Mass, in those men who, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, spoke out in tongues and prophecy in the midst of the first Christian congregations.

A common form of reply from the earliest centuries was the Greek *Kyrie eleison*, which also retains a prominence in our Eucharistic Sacrifice today. The entire Mass, except for a few Hebrew expressions, was then said in Greek. In their own synagogues the Jews, as we saw, had need of an official " interpreter," who could translate the ancient

Hebrew Scriptures. At Rome, too, the Mass was for a long period at first said in Greek.

The *Kyrie eleison,* " Lord have mercy on us," was an expression perfectly familiar to the Apostles. They had heard it directed to our Lord in the open streets. To quote but one example, St. Luke tells us how when Christ entered a certain town He was there met by ten lepers, who " lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us " (xvii, 13). All the first Christians were equally familiar with it from its recurrence in their psalms. What, then, could have been more natural than that this expression should have come from the lips of the Apostles in their Masses, and particularly from their congregations in replying to the petitions which were made for all classes of people in the early eucharistic assemblies.

The earliest fixed application of the *Kyrie eleison* in the Mass, so far as we can definitely learn from documents, was its use as a refrain after a series of petitions at the very beginning of the liturgy. To each invocation the entire people responded: " Lord have mercy on us." This was the so-called " Litany," of which the responses alone finally continued still to be used in the Western Church, and were there arranged into our ninefold cry to the Blessed Trinity, but in the Greek Church the Litany itself remains to the present day.

Again, it would not be straining probabilities in the slightest, if we put upon the lips of the Apostles and their Hebrew converts, some of the identical expressions which occur in the Preface to the Latin

Mass today, and were familiar in all rites from the earliest centuries.

We shall later see in connection with the First Letter of St. Clement to the Corinthians that the triple *Sanctus*, at the conclusion of our Preface, was actually used as a response by the entire congregation in the Apostolic Age. He refers to this use by the first-century Corinthians, to whom he is writing, and we must presume that it was also equally familiar at Rome, whence his letter was sent.

Clearly, therefore, it was a common response made by the people during the Apostolic days and had not improbably been taken over from the synagogue by the Apostolic Christians, who might readily have used it in their first Masses. Its origin, of course, is to be found in Isaias where the Seraphim are described crying out to one another: " Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of his glory " (vi, 3).

We also know that the present introductory dialogue to this prayer of Thanksgiving, whose opening part we call the Preface, goes back to the most remote times. " Lift up your hearts," the celebrant said, as he says today (*Sursum Corda*). And the people replied, " we have them lifted up to the Lord " (*Habemus ad Dominum*).

In the third century, in fact, St. Cyprian found it necessary to explain the significance of these words, which were then already regarded as an ancient liturgical formula, precisely as we find it necessary to explain their import to the Faithful today, seven-

teen centuries later. He even uses our very word "Preface."[1]

"For this reason," he writes, "the priest says a *preface* before the prayer [i.e. the Eucharistic or "Thanksgiving" Prayer], that by it he may dispose the minds of the Faithful, saying, 'Lift up your hearts,' that when the people answer: 'We have them lifted up to the Lord,' they may be reminded to think of the Lord alone" (*De orat. dom.*, xxxi).

"Daily throughout the entire universe," St. Augustine wrote somewhat later, "the human race answers almost with one voice that they have their hearts lifted up to the Lord" (*De vera Relig.* iii).

Brightman, in his "Liturgies, Eastern and Western" (556), gives as the source of this particular exclamation of celebrant and people, the passage from the Lamentations: "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord in the heavens" (iii, 41).

The next part of this Preface dialogue, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God" (*Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*), has been pointed out by Fortescue as identical with the Jewish grace before meals which runs: "Let us give thanks to Adonai our God" (*Berakoth*, 6), while its response by the people: "It is meet and just" (*Dignum et justum est*), has the characteristic Hebrew parallelism. Everything, therefore, would lead us back to the Apostolic Age for the

[1] Remarkably enough Origen, too, who died in 254, four years before the death of St. Cyprian, uses here the Greek equivalent of "Preface" (*De Orat.* 33). Our "Preface," namely, was for them the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer (*Anaphora*), which, as we shall see, corresponded to our combined Preface and Canon.

original use of these formulas, when the synagogue and private worship of the Jews, and the old Semitic turns of expression would naturally influence the first Christian forms of prayer, without affecting the purely Christian spirit of those devotions.

In this connection let us turn to just one other source, the Apostolic Constitutions VIII. While these were written in the fourth century, they purport, by a literary fiction, to be derived directly from the Apostles. The portion corresponding to our Preface (i.e. the beginning of the *Anaphora* in the Greek) is attributed to the Apostle St. James, brother of St. John of Zebedee. He lays down his rules in the first person. The fact, however, is that in reality much of the primitive liturgy has without any doubt found its place here.

The long Preface handed down by St. Clement of Rome in the first century, for instance, while not copied in the Apostolic Constitutions, finds there the most astonishing parallels that cannot possibly be due to chance. It will be interesting, therefore, to place side by side the Preface dialogue of the Apostolic Constitutions VIII, which certainly represents in the main the early liturgical forms, and our own Preface dialogue as in the Mass of today.

Before introducing this parallel I should state, as already previously mentioned, that in place of the *Dominus Vobiscum*, the same idea will be found in the Apostolic Constitutions, expressed in a much more expanded form, as quoted from St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians (xiii, 13).

	Apostolic Constitutions VIII	Roman Mass Liturgy Today
Celebrant	The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you.	The Lord be with you.
People [2]	And with your spirit.	And with your spirit.
Celebrant	Lift up your mind.	Lift up your hearts.
People	We have them lifted up to the Lord.	We have them lifted up to the Lord.
Celebrant	Let us give thanks to the Lord.	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People	It is meet and just.	It is meet and just.
Celebrant	It is truly meet and just before all things to praise Thee, true God, etc.	It is truly meet and just, right and salutary that we should always and in all places give thanks, etc.

The prayer ends with an even more complete enumeration of the angelic hierarchies than our own, and with the triple *Sanctus* of the Seraphim, where,

[2] The answers in the Roman Mass Liturgy today are no longer given by the people directly, but in the Eastern Liturgy the people still make the responses.

as is still the case in our own form, the Hebrew word *Sabaoth* is used.

Surely this dialogue at the beginning of the Preface, and this acclamation at the end, going back to the earliest centuries of Christianity, indicate how closely the Mass of the earliest centuries is connected with our own.

Setting for St. Peter's Mass

WHERE MASS WAS SAID IN ST. PETER'S DAY

ONE of the most vivid narratives in literature, sacred or secular, is the stirring account of the delivery of St. Peter from prison, as told by St. Luke in the twelfth chapter of his Acts of the Apostles. The date of the events there narrated must have been about the year 42 of our era.

Not long before that time, Herod Agrippa I, after being invested with ample dominion by the Emperor Claudius, had returned from the Roman court to govern in Palestine. He was a ruler without principle or conscience, a panderer to imperial favor and a seeker after political popularity, in every sense a time-server. Just now his first purpose was to gain the good will of the Jews.

Unscrupulous in his methods, Herod at once applied whatever means he thought would be most effective. To please the Jews he therefore simulated an intense zeal for the Temple, which won for him the highest praise even from the great Jewish historian Josephus. But not satisfied with this, he went still

further and inaugurated a bitter persecution against the heads of the Christian Church in Jerusalem.

His first notorious act was to put to death the Apostle St. James, brother of St. John the Evangelist, who with the latter was one of the three disciples especially favored by Our Lord. James had declared his readiness to drink of the same chalice with Christ and to be baptized in His baptism, the baptism of blood. He now was given the distinction of being the first of the Apostles to lay down his life for the Faith.

In deciding upon the death of St. James, Herod Agrippa has apparently at first not been perfectly clear as to the full political consequences of his act, but when he saw that he thus gained his purpose of pleasing the Jews, he at once proceeded further, and ordered the arrest of Peter, intending to deal with him in the same manner. It chanced, however, that this was now the time of the Azymes, and so Herod kept Peter in prison, intending to bring him before the people when the Pasch should arrive. Acting upon their desires, he would then give orders for his instant execution.

For Peter, this captivity was no new experience. Only a few years had elapsed since the days of the Resurrection, and already he had more than once been cast into bonds for Christ. He was sharing the fate of his Master, and was no less prepared than his fellow-Apostle St. James had been to give the last proof of loyalty by offering up the sacrifice of his life.

Already he could picture to himself the wildly surging, madly shouting and embittered multitude,

before which Herod meant to drag him. There, as Peter realized, he would look down upon the faces of many of the very men who had raised their voices clamoring for the death of Christ upon the Cross. They would now cry out for his own.

Peter, as Herod knew, was the most conspicuous victim he could offer to propitiate the good will of these people. He was the first of the Apostles, the visible head of the entire Christian community, the "Rock" on whom Christ said that He would build His Church, the holder of the keys in His Spiritual Kingdom: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi, 19). Thus in figurative words, the supreme power under the New Dispensation had been promised by Christ to Peter and his successors. They were to rule that Church which would supplant Temple and synagogue. How, then, could the King better please the enemies of that Church than by delivering up to them and condemning to death Peter, the spiritual leader in that spiritual Kingdom whose propagation the Jews sought to avert by every means?

Herod, therefore, would run no risk of losing, by any chance whatever, this important prisoner. Not satisfied with placing the ordinary guards at Peter's prison cell, he further made use of a special prison method imported by him from Pagan Rome.

Two soldiers were chained to Peter himself. The heavy irons were first firmly secured about the wrists of the Apostle, and thence a separate chain was fastened to each of the two prison guards. Humanly

speaking, there was here no possible chance of escape.

The night before the Pasch had now arrived and Peter was sleeping between his armed custodians, manacled fast to them. Suddenly a bright light shone in his cell, and an Angel of the Lord stood before him. Striking Peter on the side, the Angel raised him up, saying: "Arise quickly." At the same time the chains fell from Peter's wrists.

"Gird thyself and put on thy sandals," the celestial visitor continued. The Apostle obeyed as in a dream. His outer garment was still lying at his side. "Cast thy garment about thee and follow me," the Angel commanded.

Without understanding in the least what was happening to him, Peter carried out precisely every order given him, thinking all the while that he was merely beholding a vision. Led by the Angel he passed the first guard, posted at the outside of the prison, and then the second. But no voice challenged him.

At last they came to the iron gate that led into the city. It opened of its own accord. The Angel entered, leading Peter through one of the streets. Then suddenly he vanished, and Peter found himself alone, standing bewildered in the silent night, while around him lay in tranquil peace the sleeping city of Jerusalem.

Then for the first time he realized what had actually taken place. "Now, I know in very deed," he exclaimed, "that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

That expectation was that they would put him to death on the morrow, and by killing the shepherd would scatter the flock.

Reflecting on what had happened, Peter, with apparently no deliberation as to his course, hurried along the familiar way which led him directly to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who is surnamed "Mark." It is one of the houses in which we know that Christian assemblies were held, and in which therefore the Eucharist was celebrated in Apostolic days.

The entire narrative seems to indicate that this was a place of resort to which Peter would turn without further thought.

It was a private dwelling like all the other places in which at that time the Eucharist was celebrated, and evidently was well known to all the Christians in Jerusalem.

We may hold it as practically certain that the Mark in question here, to whose mother the house belonged, was the same whom now we know as Mark the Evangelist. It is he who was to write out the instructions on the life of Christ, which he doubtless had often heard from the lips of Peter in this very house.

Mark was not merely to become the future Evangelist, but one of the leaders in Christ's newly established Church. He was to be intimately associated, not only with Peter, but also with Paul, in various Apostolates. We know that he was at Rome with the Prince of the Apostles when the latter wrote: "The

Church that is in Babylon [i.e. Pagan Rome] saluteth you, and so doth my son Mark" (I. Peter v, 23). This, moreover, is taken to indicate that Peter had also baptized him, doubtless in the same dwelling. He was further "cousin-german of Barnabas," as St. Paul tells us. We see therefore how intimately this family and their home are linked up with the early history of the Church.

The house of Mary, Mark's mother, was probably one of the Christian residences to which St. Luke refers when he tells us, in writing of the first converts whom St. Peter had made, that after their Temple visits they went daily to various private homes, hearing Mass and receiving Holy Communion, or as St. Luke expresses it, "breaking bread from house to house" (Acts ii, 46).

Of all the houses frequented by the Christians in early Apostolic days none, apparently, enjoyed such distinction as this house of Mary. There is in fact a tradition, though its origin can so far be traced to later times only, that it was the very Cenacle itself where the institution of the Holy Eucharist had taken place, and which is believed to have been used as the main place in which the first Christians offered up the Holy Sacrifice.

This tradition readily harmonizes with another, coming to us from the early centuries, according to which Mark was considered to have been the man mentioned in connection with the Last Supper, as carrying a pitcher of water into the house in which the Cenacle chamber was located. Our Divine Lord

BRONZE STATUE OF ST. PETER. *Vatican Basilica, Rome*

Sixth-century statue which reproduces the likeness of St. Peter according to authentic traditions of earliest Christian art.

had previously sent ahead Peter and John to make preparations, and His orders to them were:

"Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, follow him. And whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house: The master saith, Where is my refectory, where I may eat the pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining room furnished, and there prepare ye for us" (Mark xiv, 13–15).

The pitcher of water, in fact, became so intimately connected with St. Mark that it was used as a symbol for this Evangelist in the early centuries.

If the ancient tradition be true, it points to the conclusion that the Cenacle was in reality no other house than that of St. Mark's mother, whose husband would then still have been alive. Could it be historically established it would make certain that already on the evening of the Last Supper Peter had come to this dwelling. This would more than account for the intimacy which existed between him and its inmates. It would lead to the further interesting conclusion that here, too, the chalice of the Last Supper would probbably at first have been preserved, and that in his Masses said here, Peter might on particular occasions have even used this very cup.

These are fascinating suggestions, but what we clearly know is that the house of Mark's mother contained a room sufficiently large to serve, not merely for the Last Supper, but as a meeting place for the early Church, and that it was actually so used.

" Many," we are told, were assembled here at the time of Peter's coming.

But what is still more significant is the fact that without deliberation Peter turned his steps directly to this house, and here, too, gave his message to be conveyed to the entire Church in Jerusalem, to pastor and people. Let the reader draw his own conclusions from these details.

It was in the dead of the night that the Apostle reached that house, but even at that silent hour, as St. Luke writes, " many were gathered together and praying " there (Acts xii, 12). Since at that period the Eucharistic Services were never held except at night, and since they readily could be prolonged into the small hours of the morning, as in fact we know to have been the case later, it may well have been that the Holy Sacrifice had actually been offered and completed there, but a short time before the Apostle's arrival.

Catholics today are exhorted to prolong their devotions after Communion to at least another quarter of an hour after the Holy Sacrifice has been completed. But these first Christians did not measure their prayers and their time for Divine service so sparingly.

Besides, just now, the entire Church had something very definite to pray for: the safety of its visible head on earth. So, therefore, after the imprisonment of Peter, as the Acts definitely tell us: " prayers were made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him " (xii, 5). It is precisely as today the Church would pray for the needs of the " suc-

cessor in the Chair of St. Peter," in times of peril and persecution, were the Holy See itself threatened.

We recall how under somewhat similar circumstances St. Paul, during the persecutions that elsewhere broke out against the first Christians, did not begin the Mass proper until after midnight in the upper chamber of the third loft in that private house at Troas in Bithynia. It was not until the full daylight that those Bithynian Christians reached their homes, after attending the Eucharistic Services at which St. Paul himself preached, where they heard his Mass and received from his hands the Body and Blood of Christ, and then listened once more, with fervor, to his final words.

But to return to St. Peter. He had made his way directly to the house of Mary and we now find him there knocking for admittance at the outer gate. A maid, a little "slave girl" as we learn from the Greek text, who probably was portress, named Rhode, "came to hearken."

Rhode was a favorite Greek name and simply signified "Rose." Now no sooner did "Rose" catch the sound of Peter's voice than she recognized it at once. No better evidence could be given to show how familiar in that house St. Peter must have been.

But out of sheer joy, Rose, as was quite natural, forgot entirely to open the gate for him, and so leaving Peter standing outside she ran breathlessly into the house to tell the glad tidings to the Christians assembled there. The gentleness of Peter's character is beautifully reflected here in the affectionate reverence

with which he had inspired this little maid, whose name continues through all these centuries to live on in our hearts as not the least cherished of our memories.

" As soon as she knew Peter's voice," as St. Luke delightfully continues his account, " she opened not the gate for joy, but running in she told that Peter stood before the gate."

But while Peter was left standing outside of the house, an argument developed within, where " Rose " was the center of dispute, bravely maintaining her ground that it was Peter himself who had returned to them. They said to her: Thou art mad. But she affirmed that it was so. Then said they: It is his angel.

Certainly the Guardian Angel of the Apostle was at hand, but Peter himself, too, was there, and trying hard by this time to make himself heard. " And when they had opened, they saw him, and were astonished."

What now followed is briefly told. They plied him with a thousand questions, all at the same time. " But he, beckoning to them with his hand to hold their peace, told how the Lord had brought him out of prison, and he said: Tell these things to James [i.e. the Apostle James the Less] and to the brethren. And going out he went into another place." That other place, purposely not named here, is understood to have been Rome.

It is not, however, to be assumed that Peter hastened upon his distant journey without partaking of some strengthening food. Possibly the remnants of the

Agape were hastily set before him. We can see Mary, the mistress of the house, and Mark himself — not forgetting the servant maid " Rose " — all hurrying about to bring together what was best from the broken meats of the meal. Whether Peter delayed still further during his stay, to offer up the Holy Mass, we do not know. But whether or not Peter said Mass on this particular occasion is immaterial to us here. Certainly, he must often have offered up the Holy Sacrifice in this very house where he was so familiar, and which apparently — to use our way of expression — was the main church in Jerusalem.

It is here, therefore, that we mean to be present at one of St. Peter's Masses.

A FOREWORD TO THE NARRATIVE OF ST. PETER'S MASS

FOR our attendance at St. Peter's Mass, or the Breaking of Bread, as it was then called, we shall choose a moment less filled with turmoil and persecution than the time of the Apostle's miraculous delivery from prison at the hand of the Angel. From the house of Mark's mother, he that same night fled to Rome. Let us then take a period at which we are certain that he had again returned to visit Jerusalem. Such a date is the year 51 of our era, when the Council of Jerusalem was held by the primitive Church.

According to our best historical knowledge, the death of Christ took place about the year 29. More than twenty years, therefore, would have elapsed since the institution of the Eucharist. During that time, we may presume, the primitive Eucharistic Rite had been sufficiently developed by the Apostles.

There was then no variety of Masses as now we have them in the Roman liturgy for the different feasts and seasons of the year. The essentials, indeed, both of the Sacrifice and the liturgy always remain the same; the Canon, too, is practically left unchanged;

yet we continually vary our Prefaces, Collects, and other set parts of the Mass. In the early Church there were no Masses of Saints, or of special Mysteries, or Seasons. It was always one and the same Eucharistic Service, consisting of the Christianized synagogue devotions and the Mass proper, as now we should call it.

Yet within this permanent outline of the Apostolic Mass there was also sufficient variety of quite another kind from that with which we ourselves are familiar. Besides the constant changes in the lessons, which were greater than in our own day, there was in the beginning absolutely no set and invariable form for any lengthy prayer, with the exception of the Our Father and of the psalms that were sung. There could, of course, be no essential change in the formula of Consecration which Christ had Himself prescribed, but in general, within the entire life of the Apostles, the prayers said at the Mass were extemporary. This, however, must be correctly understood.

During the period of more than twenty years which had now elapsed since the Last Supper, the Apostles had naturally accustomed themselves to certain definite forms that varied only slightly. Each specially significant prayer must already have acquired its precise place, purpose and nature, so that the people knew exactly when and what to answer, since all replies were given by them in common, as a body.

The greatest liberty necessarily existed in the Christianized synagogue service, since the matter of

this was essentially to a large extent variable, but its general outlines would always be carefully preserved.

Our Eastern Churches, it should be mentioned, have here adhered more closely to the primitive Eucharistic Liturgy in still practically keeping their own Liturgy unchanged the whole year around, except for the inevitable variety in the lessons, and a few special chants for great feasts. In a word, the daily variations in our Western Mass Liturgy are unknown in our Eastern Churches today, as they were evidently unknown in the primitive Church of the Apostles. Yet no such changes are out of conformity with the command of Christ, since every Rite that is in union with Rome observes perfectly the Divine Ordination: "Do *this*." Nothing essential that Christ prescribed is omitted.

In describing a Mass, as said by St. Peter, two ways were open to me.

The first was to confine myself to giving only whatever could be gathered from the Gospels, Epistles and Acts of the Apostles. This would have been possible, allowing merely for the addition of such local coloring as might be called for.

The second was to use besides these prime sources such other information also as could be gathered from first-century writings, or other documents of the early Church, where these evidently contained traditions of the Apostolic Age.

I have chosen the latter course.

As a consequence the Mass as here said by St. Peter is based on what has been gathered not from

the Scriptures only, but also from first-century documents, or such early traditions as can, with sufficient likelihood, be traced back to the Apostolic Age.

In the latter case the reason for this likelihood will always be given in the footnotes, which throughout these chapters are of supreme importance.

In particular it may be stated here that a moderate and cautious use has been made from time to time in the following chapters, of the Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions to which, however, the references will invariably be given in the footnotes. This document was compiled in Syria during the fourth century, about the year 350. Chapters v-xv of Book VIII contain a most remarkable and complete ritual, which, though hardly the official liturgy of any particular church, yet expresses accurately the type of all the various Syrian liturgies. Its ritual arrangement of prayers, style and general tenor, Duchesne held, are exactly representative of the great Churches of Syria, Antioch, Laodicea, Tyre, Caesarea, and Jerusalem.

That the compiler made use of primitive sources and Apostolic traditions is also certain, but in any particular detail, further external evidence is needed to avail ourselves of it. On this subject Adrian Fortescue thus reservedly sums up his conclusions:

"The parallels between Apostolic Constitutions VIII and the early Fathers, noted by Drews, are too close to be accidental. Nor does it seem likely that in these cases the compiler quotes these Fathers. *We should then admit the primitive liturgy as the common source* and say that Apostolic Constitutions VIII

does contain a considerable amount of early liturgical matter. It is another thing to say that it is the primitive liturgy. The compiler may have imbedded this matter in the order of the Antiochene rite of his time, or into his own ideal arrangement. One would be wary of affirming that any one detail of the Apostolic Constitutions VIII is universal or primitive unless it be confirmed by independent witness elsewhere," ("The Mass," 66).

The caution expressed in the last sentence is very important and has been the rule carefully adhered to in the following chapters.

In deciding on the form of the altar table special attention was given to the oldest catacomb frescoes that were painted close to the time of the Apostles.

The earliest actual Mass picture we possess, the *Fractio Panis*, belongs to the very opening of the second century, and so practically to the Apostolic Age. We behold here a large sofa, as we might call it. Raised above the floor, a long semicircular pillow is visible, behind which the communicants are reclining in the usual Roman way, customary also in the East. The extended pillow serves for their support, while before them, apparently on a level with the floor, is what we should call the altar table. The Bishop is seated at the head of the sofa, on a small bench. He is breaking a consecrated Loaf, while before him is the two-handled Chalice.

There can consequently be no doubt that the Mass is here represented. Exactly the same arrangement is found in other catacomb paintings which picture sym-

bolically the Eucharistic Banquet. These we shall consider fully in our last chapters.

In the *Fractio Panis* six communicants are present, one of them a woman. It is evidently a catacomb scene. The large couch reminds us at once of the Last Supper, at which Our Lord and His Apostles also reclined according to the custom of the day.

While this arrangement is precisely what we should expect for an Apostolic Mass at which just a few Faithful are present, it would hardly appear to answer the purpose of a larger gathering.

Turning from the *Fractio Panis* we find another catacomb picture of about equal antiquity. In place of the sofa it represents a tripod table, at which the celebrant stands, offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. Such small tripod tables are common in the earliest catacomb pictures referring to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Naturally these pictures are more or less symbolical, or even entirely so, and yet it is reasonable to conclude that they may also represent a reality, as is the case with the symbolical wicker baskets that contain loaves.

Small tables, whether tripods or not, at which the celebrant could stand and be seen by all the congregation which he faced, would seem to have better answered the needs of the regular Christian gatherings and made far more convenient the distribution of Communion to them, than a large table around which a few only can be seated. The latter, on the other hand, was well enough adapted to a small catacomb chamber, for the funeral Mass of some particular

family, such as is thought to be represented in the *Fractio Panis*.

Ch. Rohault De Fleury, in his monumental volumes, " La Messe " (I, 53), gives a description of the palace of Pudens in which he holds that St. Peter was obviously wont to offer up the Holy Sacrifice. Authority for his assumptions is the Acts of St. Praxedes. He makes no attempt to describe a Mass as said by the great Apostle, but simply wishes to suggest the surroundings and picture the interior of a pagan domestic chapel, converted into a church for Peter and the first Christians at Rome. The archeology alone concerns us here.

Bringing his readers into the palace of the newly converted Roman, he leads them through vestibule and atrium, that swarm with pagan clients, until at last they arrive at a narrow court which leads to the *sacrarium*.

On the white marble, over the entrance to this chapel, there had been an inscription in bronze letters. That inscription has only recently been removed, but the outline of the letters remains traceable on the stone. The inscription read: " To the good goddess." The more evil the pagan god or goddess, the more careful would their Greek and Roman clients be to call them " good," not out of love but out of fear, in order to placate them.

As the door swings open the eye is caught by the lamps hung from golden chains and exhaling a sweet fragrance. But in the apse of the room, in the niche where but lately had stood the statue of the goddess,

now stands a small table of beautiful workmanship, meant to serve for altar. Behind it is a throne, with bas-reliefs in ivory, intended for the celebrant of the Mass, St. Peter.

We behold, therefore, the same idea followed out, of a small table and single "throne" for the Apostolic celebrant, which I have here suggested.

With these statements made, we shall attend a Mass as said by St. Peter under quite different surroundings.

JOINING THE FAITHFUL AT ST. PETER'S MASS

IT is the year 51 of our era. The hour is toward nightfall. Beneath our feet are the smooth-worn stones of the ancient city of Jerusalem. With a little group of Jewish converts to Christianity we find ourselves rapidly approaching the gate of the house of Mary, the mother of Mark.

Here and there we behold figures in the distance, hurrying through the narrow streets of the city. They are Christians, all converging toward this one point. They would not be late for the opening of the Eucharistic Service, at which Peter is himself to preside. He will be there alone with us this day, bringing along only his spiritual son Mark to assist him. Both have come in advance to prepare for the solemn Council to be held in the City of Jerusalem this memorable year.

We notice many of the Christians are carrying little wicker baskets or small packets. They contain provisions, as we rightly surmise, for the *Agape,* which in part will also be devoted to charity.

Friendly greetings are cheerfully and affectionately exchanged, but most of these people appear sunk

in deep thought. The presence of Peter in their midst vividly recalls to them the past. The very Jesus, with whom Peter walked, the Same whom all Jerusalem had known and seen in the flesh, not so many years ago, is again to come to them this day, glorified and immortal, as He now sits at the right hand of the Eternal Father, but humbly hidden beneath the Eucharistic veils. Still living and familiar to them are the witnesses who beheld Him after the Resurrection and who even had seen Him ascending into Heaven, until the clouds hid Him from their view.

Absorbed in these reflections, we quickly arrive at the gate. For just a moment we pause to raise the large bronze knocker, and then allow it to drop with a resounding clang against the door. There is no fear that we shall not be heard. Already Rose herself is hastening to open and bid us welcome. Years ago, as a little slave girl, she had been purchased by Mark's mother, and this in God's Providence had led to procuring for her the inestimable blessing of the Faith in the happy Christian household of which she is now a cherished member.

The dusk is already falling and the shadows are slowly advancing out of the corners of the rooms, as she leads us aloft to a large upper chamber where the Christians are assembled. Even now, as we enter among them, the lamps are being lit and we can quickly cast our glance over that most remarkable gathering, brought together from all ranks of society but where the poor predominate by far. Nowhere else

in the world of this day, over which still spread the wings of the proud Roman Eagle, can such a company be found, assembled on the same footing of equality.

Hardly have we begun our observation when a curtain is drawn and Peter himself stands before us. All eyes turn to him with affection and reverence. He is still in outward appearance the plain, simple, impetuous fisherman, but grace has worked its wonderful transformation. Less reliant of himself, he is more strongly rooted in God.

A Divine call had set its seal upon him: "I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi, 19).

The authority then promised has now been conferred upon him since the Lord's Resurrection. "Feed my lambs," the Risen Lord had said to him, "Feed my sheep" (John xxi, 15–17). Christ's whole Flock, lambs and sheep, were thus alike put into his care, as their supreme shepherd.

A sublime enthusiasm kindles his features with the light of another world. There is power, but also kindliness in the expression of his strongly-marked countenance, with its curled and rounded beard. Energy and determination are strikingly combined in him with gentleness and consideration for others. All know him, all revere him, all love him.

But his mind now turns to the great Drama soon to be enacted. He is to perform an action often indeed repeated, but one that can never stale, that can never

lose its Divine significance, its sublime impressiveness. He is to carry out once more the order divinely given him and his fellow Apostles, and all their successors in the priestly ministry, even to the end of time: — to do what Christ had done at the Last Supper. He is to renew in an unbloody manner the Sacrifice of Calvary, and to offer to all those present there the very Body and Blood of the God-Man to be their food unto life eternal.

But this sacred action must not be entered upon too hastily. Certain preliminary devotions are first to prepare the heart for the coming Mystery. Providentially adapted to that purpose are the synagogue services which Peter and most of those present here with him in this upper chamber in Jerusalem had faithfully observed during all their previous lives. What better could they do than to infuse into them the spirit of Christ, transforming them from Jewish into Christian, and using them as a worthy introduction to the supreme and distinctive Rite of the New Law, the Breaking of Bread, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!

The large room, originally intended for banquet purposes and elegant in its design, is plainly furnished with seats for the numerous guests, while here and there a small table can be seen, the use of which will become apparent later.

At the upper end, in the apse of the room, is a platform, and on it a tripod table. Behind it an ornamental chair has been placed for Peter, to serve as his Bishop's throne at this Eucharistic Sacrifice. The table

will be the altar of Sacrifice. But no oblations of bread and wine have as yet been placed there. This will be done in its own due time.[1]

To the right of the table is a strong but artistically wrought closet, with a richly designed door, that is kept carefully locked. Behind it are kept the rolls of the Law and the Prophets. Among them, too, some Apostolic Epistles have already found their place and are reverently preserved. More precious than silver or gold to them are the treasures so jealously protected by these first Judaic converts.

To the same side, but slightly further removed from the altar-table, is another small platform with a reader's desk, and a lamp suspended over it.[2] The body of the room is filled by the Faithful standing in their places.

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[1] It is important to note here that the practice observed in all the Eastern rites of preparing the offerings before the Liturgy begins, is not primitive. It is not as yet contained in the Apostolic Constitutions or any fourth-century document. St. Justin, as we shall see, at about the year 150, follows the same order for the Offertory which is still observed in the Roman Mass today. The present Oriental custom must have been introduced into the Eastern rites not earlier than the fifth century.

[2] This was later to be known as the *ambo* and plays a conspicuous part in the early Liturgies. The steps leading to it were known as the *gradus*, whence as we have already seen, our Gradual derives its name. Both the reading of the lessons and the cantor's singing took place from the *ambo*. Our pulpit serves an equally practical purpose today. The first Christians merely followed the synagogue custom, although in place of one large platform I have here introduced two, as more likely to have met the convenience of a private house. Yet it is true that this room of Mark's mother had practically become what we call a church.

"Grace unto you and peace be multiplied," [3] is the greeting to them of Peter, while they answer him: "And unto thy spirit."

Peter now opens the Eucharistic Service with a prayer. Lifting his arms and extending them, with the hands held open, he begins:

"Blessed be Thou, the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to Thy great mercy hast regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in Thy boundless love hast called us unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that can never pass away, reserved in Heaven for us. And blessed be Thy Divine Son, Jesus Christ, who in His Holy Eucharist has given us His own immortal Flesh to eat and Blood to drink, that so they may be unto us a pledge of eternal life." [4]

The Faithful have also lifted their arms, as is their custom at every public prayer,[5] and in the silence of their hearts follow the invocation of Peter, interjecting, at its various pauses, as the prayer continues, their ardent and united "Amen." Thus they signify to

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[3] (I Peter, i, 2).

[4] The first part of this prayer is based on I Peter (i, 3), the second simply contains Our Lord's promise made in regard to the Eucharist. The prayer is couched in the form of a "Blessing," such as the Jews used at the opening of their synagogue services, and which the first Jewish converts would naturally have continued to employ.

[5] The prayer with lifted arms is still to be seen at every Mass, where the various prescribed "orations" are said by the priest in the same manner as they were said by St. Peter, except that the arms are not raised quite as high as in the numerous catacomb pictures representing men and women invoking God with lifted arms (*e.g.* the symbolical *Orante*, Abraham, etc.).

Almighty God their complete accord and union with Peter in all his praise and petition.

Without any notable rigidity the Jewish custom of the separation of the men and women at Divine service is in general sufficiently observed. The former stand with heads uncovered, while the latter are veiled, or wear some suitable covering over their hair. The division of the sexes had been most strictly carried out in the Temple, where the women were even in a court separate from the men. It was natural that something at least of this practice should remain.[6]

What at once struck us on entering here was the free mingling of all classes of society. By the side of that high-born lady, from a noble patrician household, a poor slave girl has quite simply found her place, while a sun-browned toiler is standing next to that Jewish convert who was a master in Israel, and whose refined features still betoken his rank and breeding in the outer world. But before Christ these distinctions have no meaning, since He has given Himself alike to the poorest as to the richest, to the

[6] The Apostolic Constitutions II (lvii) describe in detail the formality with which the Eucharistic gatherings were arranged three centures later, about A. D. 350, when that document was compiled. A complete clergy, as well as the laity, is here in attendance, and the deacons have ample functions to perform, "for they are like the crew of a ship." Everything is to be ship-shape. The building must be oblong, "like a ship" and facing East, at the upper end is to be the Bishop's throne, with the presbytery seated to right and left. The Bishop is "as the captain of the ship." The deacons are to see to the people who occupy the body of the church, where the women are separated from the men. The lector is in the middle, placed, as always, in an elevated position. The day of the *charismata* is long past now, and order is the basic law.

most unlettered as to the learned Pharisee who must enter His Fold by the same common entrance of Holy Baptism, through which all pass alike.

But the reading is about to commence. In preparation for this Peter most appropriately invokes a final blessing, one which from his early synagogue days has still remained in his memory. His arms lifted on high, he thus petitions Almighty God:

"Thou of Thy mercy givest knowledge unto men, and teachest them understanding. Give graciously unto us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Blessed are Thou, O Lord, who graciously givest knowledge unto men." [7]

With this prayer said the services can now begin.[8]

[7] A blessing taken by me from the *Shemoneh 'Esreh.*

[8] What we have directly inherited from the Christianized synagogue service begins only with the lessons described in the next chapter. Our Roman Introit, *Kyrie eleison,* Gloria and Collects, which at present introduce the first part of Mass, are all of later origin.

The Introit is simply the remnant of the Processional Psalm, sung in connection with that later practice of the solemn entry into the church by the bishop and clergy. It may be ascribed to the fifth century. Eastern rites have no Introit.

Our *Kyrie eleison,* "Lord, have mercy," was borrowed about a century later from the Eastern Liturgy, which began with a Litany of petitions to which the people replied with those words. The recitation of the triple *Christe eleison* is however the unique practice of the Roman rite. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are thus invoked in the ninefold exclamation.

The Gloria is a Christian psalm which also cannot be traced back to the primitive Church.

The Collect dates historically to the "collection" of the clergy and people, when these met at a "station" in one church, where they said this prayer, and then marched on to another church, where the Mass was said. Originally there was one Collect only. In the

primitive Church or in the second-century account of St. Justin, Martyr, there is nothing corresponding to the Collect.

After the opening prayers, the " Liturgy " or " Mass " may be said to have begun with the lessons, to which all that has above been described may be regarded merely as an introduction.

How St. Peter Said Mass

HOLDING THE CHRISTIANIZED SYNAGOGUE SERVICE

THE opening prayers of the Christian synagogue service have been said and the Christians are seated throughout that upper chamber of the house of Mary, the mother of Mark.[1]

Mark himself is engaged in unlocking the richly wrought door behind which are kept the precious rolls of the Law and the Prophets. Taking out a scroll he reverently unwinds the fine linen wrapping, and we behold a yellow parchment, rolled on two rods, which are ornamented with carved ivory heads.

At a sign from Peter, as the presiding Bishop, a lector steps forward and receives the sacred document from the hands of Mark. With it he mounts the platform where the lamp casts its light upon the reader's desk. We hear, in the first reading, how the people murmured against Moses in the desert. "And the Lord said to Moses: Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you" (Exod. xvi, 4).

[1] Here begins at once that portion of the Christianized synagogue service from which the reading of Epistle and Gospel, the Gradual, Alleluia Chant, and Tract, as well as the sermon have been derived in our Roman Mass liturgy.

Then, when he has finished this lesson, he descends the *gradus*, still holding in his hands the roll of Exodus, while a youthful cantor goes up into his place. The young man carries no scroll in his hands, for the Psalms which are to be sung by him between successive lections, have all been faithfully written in his memory.[2]

What better Psalm could have been chosen to follow this lesson than the Great Hallel? [3]

It well suits the munificence of God's gift in the desert, foreshadowing the Eucharist, and is a hymn Our Lord Himself must doubtless have sung with His Apostles at the Last Supper.

Glowing with enthusiasm, the young man begins, his voice richly modulated as he sings:

"Praise the Lord, for He is good."

Then leaping to their feet, the congregation answers, taking up his melody:

"For His mercy endureth for ever."

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[2] In the Apostolic Constitutions II the singing of a Psalm alternates, not with the single lessons, but with every pair of lessons taken from the Law and from the Prophets. Then further lessons follow from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, and finally from the Four Gospels. During the reading of the Gospels only do priests, deacons and people rise, and remain standing in profound silence (lvii). Of all these many lessons the reading of Epistles and Gospels alone remains in our ordinary Masses throughout the year.

[3] This is Psalm cxxxv. It affords a classic example of what has already been described here as the responsory method of singing these psalms, which here assumes practically the form of a litany. In other instances often the final words only were repeated by the people, or a response was sung at the end of certain groups of verses.

With that the singer continues to praise the greatness of God and the wonders of His creation, while at each verse, like the chanting of a litany, the entire congregation answers with the same refrain, as their fathers had done before them from generation to generation:

" Praise ye the God of gods:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Praise ye the Lord of lords:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who alone doth great wonders:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who made the heavens in understanding:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who established the earth above the waters:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who made the great lights:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
The sun to rule the day:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
The moon and the stars to rule the night:
For His mercy endureth for ever."

The singer now passes on to various special benefits conferred by God on His own chosen people of old:

" Who smote Egypt with their first-born:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who brought out Israel from among them:
For His mercy endureth for ever."

So the enumeration of favors shown to their fathers continues, while the people with fervor sing their constant response, which now becomes more and more ardent, reaching a climax in the third of the following verses:

" For He was mindful of us in our affliction:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
And He redeemed us from our enemies:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who giveth food to all flesh:
For His mercy endureth for ever."

What could be more natural than that at this part the Eucharist should at once be called to the mind of all, the Divine Food that Christ had promised to bestow, His own Flesh which here at last He gives to them, the true Bread from Heaven? Ardently, therefore, singer and people chant with glowing emotion the last two verses and responses:

" Give glory to the God of Heaven:
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Give glory to the Lord of lords:
For His mercy endureth for ever." [4]

[4] The manner in which the Gradual has finally come to take the place of the Psalm which followed the Prophecies, while the Alleluia Chant (or in its place the Tract during the sorrowful seasons) has been left as the only relic of the Psalm which had followed the Epistle in the Early Church, was fully explained in a previous chapter: " The Lessons and Congregational Singing."

With the Psalm completed, cantor and lector again change places at the reader's desk. The lessons from the Pentateuch are resumed, alternating with the chanting of Psalms. But soon, at a sign from the Apostle, the roll of the Law is returned to Mark, who replaces it in its casket, bringing forth in turn the scroll of the Prophet Isaias. Peter himself points out the passages to be read, which will form the subject of his own discourse.

Quickly, then, the lessons once more alternated with the Psalms, in these readings from that grandest of all literatures the world had ever known before the coming of Christ. The voice of the reader swells and rises as the Prophet describes the light of the Faith bursting forth in its splendor:

" Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising " (Isaias lx, 1–3).

The lessons from the Prophet are ended and the roll has been returned to its official custodian, but the hearts of these first converts still burn within them at the predictions of the promised Kingdom of the Messias, which they now behold verified in this very assembly, and in the many other Christian congregations that have already sprung up in the various parts of the Greco-Roman world.

Yet there is still another lesson to be read, and it

is from the Epistle of one of the Apostles. This letter has already passed from church to church and has now reached the congregation at Jerusalem.

Before many years Mark, too, will have completed his account of the life and teachings of Jesus, according to the instructions he has heard from the lips of Peter. With Peter's approval this new Gospel, or "tiding of good news," will then similarly be read and eagerly listened to in the churches. These and other additional readings will necessitate a constantly more notable lessening of the lections from the Law and the Prophets.[5]

With the conclusion of the reading Peter now begins to speak. Following the synagogue custom, he at first remains seated, explaining the words of the Prophecy of Isaias, but as his fervor moves him, he rises to his feet, speaking of Christ, and Him crucified, risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

Carried along by the ardor of his zeal, he recounts what his own eyes have seen and his ears have heard of the Word made flesh that dwelt in our midst. No one who here listens to this authentic testimony can doubt that He of whom he speaks was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. That same Divine Word, incarnate of the Virgin Mary, he tells them, they are again to receive this very night in the Communication of the Breaking of Bread. The Apostle's face is

[5] Besides the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles were often added in later years, and also readings from the Bishop's own pastorals to his flock.

illumined with a heavenly light as he repeats the very words he himself heard from the lips of Christ:

" Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day." [6]

His sermon completed, Peter resumes his place. Then, after a pause of deep and reverent silence, a plain man from amidst the brethren arises and begins to utter words in a language entirely foreign to his lips. His features glow and his words come fluently as the Holy Ghost inspires him. He has hardly finished when an " interpreter " arises, a man possessed of a special gift of the Holy Ghost, enabling him to make known to the brethren the meaning of what has been said.

A prophet next is heard. He has not the gift of foretelling future events, but his highly useful function is to instruct and guide the Faithful by the thoughts which the Divine Spirit Himself empowers him to speak unto the edification of all the church. His words search into the hearts of his hearers and teach them to know and do God's will. All listen intently.

Others succeed, speaking in tongues and prophecies, as the Spirit of God prompts their utterances. The time has arrived wherein are fulfilled the words of the Prophecy of Joel, to which Peter himself pointed on the first Pentecost Day:

[6] (John vi, 54, 55).

"And it shall come to pass after this, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel ii, 28).

Freely these inspirations from God are voiced in the assembly. We do not wonder that the hearts of all are kindled with a Divine fire which shall soon enflame the world. They are still living in the age of miracles and their fervor under the special lights and graces granted them cannot be contained in the channels of ordinary devotion. It is not to be expected, however, that these extraordinary *charismata* will outlast the Apostolic Age, for whose special needs they are now given.

The men alone speak out publicly in these gatherings. A modesty and reserve, like that of Mary the Mother of God, characterizes the first convert women, who have accomplished great things for the Faith. In the present case the house itself in which the Sacred Mysteries are to be offered is placed at the disposal of the Prince of the Apostles by a great woman of these early days, who herself bears the blessed name of Mary, and who with all her household and belongings is evidently at the service of Christ and His Church.

But tongues and prophecies have by this time ceased in the gathering. Some one has arisen and begins to intone a new spiritual canticle composed by him. Soon all are on their feet and join in the sacred song, by repeating the last words of the singer.

So the Christianized synagogue service draws to its

end. But there is still a final and important action which we are now to witness.

A small group of men and women have gathered about Peter. Humbly they kneel and ask for his blessing. We recognize in them those who are still under instruction and not yet baptized. They cannot, therefore, be permitted to attend the Divine Mysteries where all present receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Among them are a few also who for other reasons are excluded. They are penitents who may not approach the great Sacrament before their time of penance has expired, and so are forbidden during that period to join in the Communication of the Breaking of Bread, which implies their exclusion from the Divine Sacrifice.[7]

The dismissal takes place before the *Agape*, since this material feast of love is an exterior expression of the intimate bond existing among those who will be united also in the spiritual Banquet that is to follow, thus partaking of the corporal and spiritual food together in one union of Christian love.

With true affection Peter looks upon the eager faces of the men and women kneeling before him for

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[7] This description is necessarily conjectural, but the very earliest documents pertaining to the Syrian Liturgy refer to such a dismissal. In the Apostolic Constitutions VIII (vi, vii, lx) we have long prayers recited respectively at the dismissal of the catechumens, of the energumens, of the competents (directly preparing for Baptism) and finally of the penitents. Each group was in turn bidden to bow down and receive the blessing. The rite of dismissal, with its separate prayers for the different classes, as there described, was long and very solemn.

his blessings, and he asks the congregation to join earnestly with him in the common prayer which he lifts up to God that all these may receive the abundance of the Divine light, and grace, and strength, in order that so they may be able to participate with the brethren in the plenitude of spiritual riches. His petitions are answered by the "Amen" of the Faithful.[8]

After this the final blessing is solemnly given by Peter to the little group, still kneeling before him. The Apostle lifts his hands on high as he pronounces it. They then are quietly dismissed and the door closes upon them.

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[8] The Apostolic Constitutions VIII (vi-lx) expressly mention the repeated *Kyrie eleison* of the people in connection with these prayers. It should be stated, however, that no mention is made of this in the Apostolic Fathers, and I have hesitated to use it here.

When adult converts were fewer in later years and the Church discipline regarding penitents changed, the entire ceremony of dismissal came to an end, although the Byzantine Liturgy still preserves it as a formality.

FROM AGAPE TO "PREFACE" IN ST. PETER'S MASS

THE time for the *Agape* has now approached, the feast of Christian charity. The Faithful alone, who have all received the Sacrament of Baptism, are at last intimately united together, and their confession has been made.[1]

Naturally, before the opening of their mutual feast, their first act is a prayer in common. Such prayers or "blessings" are freely extemporized by St. Peter and answered by the entire congregation. The sequence of the petitions here made is already familiar to the Faithful.

Out of the fulness of his heart the Apostle beseeches Almighty God for the peace and tranquillity of the world, for bishops and their flock, for the good of all the churches and of all brethren, for rulers, benefactors, and enemies, for travelers and all in need of help, for the sick and afflicted, for all mankind, for the universal fulfilment of God's most holy Will and for the coming of His Kingdom over the entire earth. Intimately the Faithful follow him, and at the close

[1] The "Didache" (xiv, 1), a document belonging to the first century, expressly mentions the confession which preceded the Divine Sacrifice in the Apostolic Age. Reference shall be made to this passage later.

of each petition, they devoutly answer him. Now and again is heard that earnest Scriptural cry: *Kyrie eleison.*[2]

No sooner is this prayer completed, than the Christians, with profound and tender sentiments of affection, turn toward each other and give the Kiss of Peace, as the Apostles have taught them to do. The Divine Spirit of Love resides within their breasts, and this is but another of His external manifestations in the first age of Christian charity. Well might the pagans exclaim in wonder: "How these Christians love each other." [3]

With the prayer of the Faithful said and the Kiss of Peace given, the actual moment for the *Agape* has come. An entirely new scene suddenly opens before us, but one which perfectly harmonizes with the spirit

[2] St. Paul himself prescribes such general prayers (I Tim. ii, 1–2). The prayer here given is known as the "Prayer of the Faithful," with which in the oldest liturgies the Mass proper began. In the more developed liturgies of the third or fourth centuries the deacon recited the prayer and the Faithful responded with the *Kyrie eleison.* This was then called the "Litany" and remains to the present day in all the Eastern rites. What I have here described is found in the earliest known Liturgies of the great Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Laodicea, Tyre, etc. The casual interjection above of the Scriptural *Kyrie eleison* seems permissible here as foreshadowing the future universal use.

[3] Since separation between the sexes was doubtless sufficiently observed, even if not with all the external strictness of the Old Temple regulations, the Kiss of Peace would thus be given by the men to the men only and by the women to the women. Today, in the Roman rite, the Kiss of Peace is still exchanged among the clergy at a Solemn Mass. Its place in the ritual has been changed so that it now follows after the first of three silent prayers of the celebrant which immediately precede the Communion.

of Divine charity expressed in the mutual embrace we have just witnessed, and which no less beautifully introduces the Sacrament of Divine Love itself that is finally to follow.[4]

The *Agape* does not belong to the Mass proper as any integral part of it, yet we do not wonder to see it so intimately combined with the Divine Sacrifice at the very beginnings of the Church. The Paschal meal of Christ, at the Last Supper, which this love feast so beautifully recalled, was no less closely connected with Christ's New Rite, that was thenceforth to replace all Mosaic sacrifices and be the New Pasch of the New Law.

We realize, then, the purpose of the few small tables we had observed on our entrance here. Cups and plates have by this time been scattered over them and eatables are being set forth there, or else distributed by youths and maidens, who serve the brethren and in their own turn partake of the meat and wine.

[4] While we definitely know that the *Agape* preceded the Eucharist in the Apostolic Age, we are given no authentic information as to the exact moment of its introduction. In the middle of the second century, when the liturgical *Agape* had already been dropped, we learn from St. Justin that the Mass proper then began with the Prayer of the Faithful and the Kiss of Peace. Next followed the Offertory and the Sacred Action. But since in any case the Kiss of Peace, after the initial prayer had been said, must have been the first intimate greeting of the Faithful when left alone to themselves, it seems evident that the *Agape* could have followed only after this mutual token of Christian love had been given. The order then would have been: Prayer of the Faithful, Kiss of Peace, *Agape*, Offertory, etc. The *Agape* may have taken place, when so more convenient, in a special refectory or some other room.

It is a modest banquet, the provisions for which, including the wine itself, were brought along by the men and women according to their means. No distinction is here made between rich and poor, but everything contributed is promiscuously placed before all. The large baskets of the rich have held enough to supply generously for the want of the poor. With gladness and simplicity of heart they all partake freely, but without excess, of the drink and food.

It is a true family repast, a genuine love feast of brethren and sisters united in the Lord, a fitting preparation of Christian charity to dispose their souls for the worthy reception of Christ in His supreme Sacrament of Divine Love.

But the evening shadows had been falling when our Eucharistic Service began. The night is now considerably advanced and the lamps are casting a soft glow on those groups in fervent converse, and joyously yet modestly partaking together of their simple feast.

At last a signal is given. The *Agape* has ended. In a moment the few small tables have been cleared and set aside. The last remnants of the material banquet have disappeared and the preparations are about to begin for that spiritual and Divine Banquet which is to be a foretaste and a pledge of the Eternal Nuptial Feast of Christ with His elect.

At this instant, the curtains near Peter's table are drawn aside and Mark appears, carrying a gilded silver plate with the bread intended for the first Con-

secration. It is part of the offerings made by the Faithful, which were abundant enough to allow for a portion to be placed aside for the Sacrifice, a portion to be devoted to the *Agape*, and a third to be given to the poor.

Directly following Mark, a servant of the house enters bearing the large silver cup, two-handled, and filled with wine. Enough is needed to give Communion under this species to all those present.

A little water is now mingled with the wine, for such was also the case at the Last Supper, conformably to the Mosaic rite of the Pasch.[5]

In the bread and wine set upon the altar, and accepted by Peter for the Sacrifice which he is about to offer, we have the first essentials included under the Divine command: "Do *this*." For these same elements of bread and wine Christ Himself had employed as the material part of the Rite performed by Him, which He ordered to be continued through the ages.

[5] That mingling of wine and water was to be faithfully and sacredly continued in the Mass down to the present day. We shall find it repeatedly referred to in the monuments as well as in the writings of the early Church. Beautiful mystical meanings were to be attached to this rite. In the second century we have St. Irenaeus referring to the Communion chalice simply as "the mingled cup."

The action described above is in substance repeated at every Mass said according to the Roman Rite. In all the Eastern Rites the offerings of bread and wine are prepared and the real Offertory is actually made before the Liturgy begins. When later the bread and wine are placed on the altar there is another prayer said which merely repeats the idea of the Offertory, but the Offertory has already taken place. Dominicans and Carmelites also prepare the offerings before the Mass.

No special prayers are here said by Peter, so far as we can be exteriorly aware, although in his heart he may now be dedicating these gifts to the Eternal Father before their actual Consecration takes place in the Sacred Action that is now soon to follow.[6]

But first Mark is now seen pouring water out of a small vessel over the fingers of Peter, and offering him a towel to dry them. This ablution is at present not meant as a liturgical action, but is simply a matter of obvious necessity, or at least ordinary propriety.

According to the custom of the day, Peter, during the *Agape*, had freely made use of his fingers in partaking of the various viands set before him. The ablution which now follows it is therefore no mere ceremony, yet this act too will continue to be performed at the Holy Mass through future centuries, assuming a new and very obvious spiritual significance by reminding the celebrant of the purity of heart with which he should approach the Divine Sacrifice. Such thoughts, too, may at this very moment be passing through the mind of Peter, were we able to read it.

The interval in the service, however, caused by these actions, is advantageously utilized for the sing-

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[6] None of the entire series of Mass prayers now connected with the Offertory go back for their origin, in whatever way, to the primitive Mass of the Apostles, or even to any of the early rites. They have had various later origins: Gallican, Mozarabic, etc., and are a heritage from the Middle Ages. Our Secret, too, is medieval. In the Mass of St. Peter, therefore, only the actions inevitably connected with the Offertory Act are given here. We then proceed directly to what corresponds to our Preface.

ing of a canticle of Divine love that equally delights the heart and prepares it for the great events that are to come. All again join in the sweet Eucharistic refrain.

But by this time Peter is in readiness at the altar table for the great Thanksgiving Prayer, in expectation of which all the Christians are now also standing in their places. We can behold their eagerness not to lose one syllable of those majestic outpourings from the soul of Peter, the divinely appointed Prince of the Apostles, in that Supreme Prayer of the Mass.

The Sacred Scriptures expressly mention Our Lord's own act of thanksgiving before each of the two Consecrations. Apparently this act greatly impressed itself upon the minds of the Apostles. Hence, their own repetition of it in carrying out His command, "Do this," was of such moment that *the entire portion of the Mass which we should describe as from Preface to Pater Noster was to be known as the Eucharistic* (*i.e.* "*Thanksgiving*") *Prayer.*

What we are now, therefore, to witness, will include both the acts of Consecration, and is to be rightly understood as one continuous Prayer, where everything centers in the Twofold Consecration. That is true even of the petitions which follow the Consecration in this portion of the Mass. It is of the utmost importance that we firmly grasp this fact, and that we consequently regard the various petitions which now will succeed each other, not as so many separate effusions, but as one entire Eucharistic or Consecration

Prayer, in which, however, the Transubstantiation is effected by the words of Institution alone.

"Grace to you and peace," [7] is Peter's opening salutation.

"And with Thy spirit," is the accustomed but earnest reply to the Apostolic greeting made by the Faithful, now drawn close together in the ties of brotherly love, as the sublime Mystery of Faith is about to be enacted in their midst, while pagans, catechumens and all the unbaptized are kept far removed from them.

Then, admonishing the people to prepare themselves fervently for the great Action which is to follow, Peter exhorts them to keep far from themselves all worldly thoughts, and to present their hearts entirely to God. In the words of the Prophet Jeremias, he solicitously urges:

"Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord in the heavens." [8] To which they eagerly reply, manifesting their full readiness:

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[7] Words taken from St. Peter's Second Epistle (1, 2). The most ancient Syrian Liturgies, including Jerusalem and Antioch, here give a greeting similarly taken from St. Paul (II Cor. xiii, 13). Our equivalent, of course, is the priest's *Dominus vobiscum*, "The Lord be with you," together with the reply as above.

[8] Lamentations (iii, 41). In my chapter on "Responses by the People in Early Church" I have shown how the *Sursum Corda*, "Lift up your hearts," with its response, "We have them lifted up to the Lord," as well as the rest of this Dialogue which precedes our Preface in the Roman liturgy, has all the earmarks of the Apostolic Age. For St. Cyprian, in the third century, the *Sursum Corda* was already an immemorable liturgical formula.

The entire Dialogue preceding our Preface is found in every liturgy, Eastern or Western, and is most ancient. There is nothing in

"We have them lifted up to the Lord."

So assured, Peter now announces the purpose of the opening words of his Eucharistic Prayer. It is to give thanks. The formula he here uses is one familiar to these Jewish converts, one which he himself had recited long before his first meeting with Christ, and which he may well have often heard from the lips of Christ Himself, since it is taken by him from the Jewish grace before meals:

"Let us give thanks," he says, "to Adonai Our God."

Then, with the rhythm of their beloved Psalter in their hearts, these Israelitic Christians reply in their truly Semitic parallelism:

"It is meet and just." [9]

At this Peter, overflowing with gratitude for all God's goodness, pours forth his Eucharistic Prayer improvised, as his heart prompts him, offering thanks to the Eternal Father, through His Only Begotten

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it that might not, in its original form, have occurred in the Mass of St. Peter. This is all I mean to stress in introducing it entire, under a conjectural original form.

I am aware that such a procedure may arouse criticism, yet I do not seek to maintain that in every Mass St. Peter used all the above formulas, but merely that there is no anachronism in his having used any of them, since there is reason for tracing them all back to the earliest age.

[9] The portion of the Eucharistic Prayer which now immediately follows, and which closes with the triple *Sanctus*, is known as the Preface in the Roman rite. In every liturgy it opens with practically the same words as in the Roman Mass, "Verily it is meet and just, etc." We find this formula in the Apostolic Constitutions themselves where it is evidently derived from earlier sources.

Son, Our Lord and Saviour, for His great gift of Creation, and for all the manifold benefits of nature and of grace bestowed upon mankind. We behold the angelic choirs springing into being, the new earth swathed in clouds, the sun and moon and stars, the multitudinous creatures made for man, the vast spiritual blessings of the Incarnation, the Redemption and the Coming of the Holy Spirit. As one by one he enumerates the wonderful gifts of God's bounty, we realize what a mighty and soul-stirring preface the opening of this Prayer is for the still more sublime events that are yet to take place in the culmination of the tremendous Sacrifice.

And then, as a fitting climax to all that grand symphony of the Divine favors, dispensed in heaven and on earth, under the Old and the New Dispensation, and here blended together into one hymn of thanksgiving, there follows in solemn majesty the united cry of the people, voicing the eternal Trisagion, the threefold Sanctus of the Seraphim before the Throne of God:

" Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory." [10]

[10] Isaias (vi, 3). That this cry of the Seraphim was actually the exclamation used by the entire people in the Apostolic Age is plain from the First Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians (xxxiv, 6, 7), written during the first century, where, under a slightly different form, this verse is quoted as the liturgical exclamation of the people. Tertullian (*De orat.* 3) and other early writers are familiar with its liturgical use. St. Peter and the Jewish converts described above were accustomed to it from the Jewish liturgy. It can even now be found assigned for the Sabbath morning service in the " Authorized Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations." It was one of

the many Providential inheritances that rightly belonged to the Church.

The "Preface" of St. Peter's Mass, to use our modern terms, follows the general development of that portion of the Eucharistic Prayer in the early Church. There was no variety of Prefaces for the different feasts, and this custom remains in the East. The many Roman Prefaces of today are much shorter in form.

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THE CONSECRATION PRAYER OF ST. PETER'S MASS

THE sublime introduction of the great Eucharistic or Consecration Prayer has ended. The triple "Holy, holy, holy," lifted up by the voices of the entire congregation, has set the blood throbbing in these noble Jewish converts, accustomed from their childhood days to that Seraphic acclamation, when as yet Christianity was for them but a Messianic promise. It has now become a Divine fulfilment. Again they realize how closely linked, as symbol with reality, are Synagogue and Church.

But this cry of the people is but a moment's interruption in the long and sustained Eucharistic Prayer, which began with the Solemn Dialogue and remains all centered in the Consecration.[1] Taking up the words of the people Peter continues as before in the same full tone and resonance of voice, addressing himself to the Eternal Father.

[1] Preface and Canon were not separated in the primitive Church, as in the Roman Rite today, and still remain combined in the Eastern Church, where together they are known as the *Anaphora.* They there formed one single Eucharistic or Consecration Prayer. Neither was the part corresponding to the Canon recited in silence, as is now done both in the East and West. (See e.g. Tertullian, *De spect.* 25.)

"Yea, verily, Thou art holy,[2] most holy, most high, most wondrously exalted through the ages. And holy, too, is Thy Only Begotten Son, Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, who with Thee participated in Thy acts of Creation and Providence through the ages of ages; who though the Creator of men, willed to become man; though the Legislator, to be under the law; though the Pontifex, to be the Victim; though the Shepherd, to die as the Lamb; who appeased Thee, His God and Father, reconciled Thee to the world, and freed mankind from the impending wrath; who was made of a Virgin, made in the flesh, God the Word, the Beloved Son, the First-Born before every creature; who in accordance with the Prophecies which through the centuries He Himself had predicted concerning Himself, sprang from the seed of David and Abraham, from the tribe of Juda, and though the Maker of all things, was Himself made in time from the womb of the Virgin."

So, freely extemporized, yet following the trend of familiar thoughts, the wonderful Consecration Prayer flows on, steadily, undeviatingly, with here and there an exclamation from the people, but bear-

[2] With these words the Eucharistic Prayer is resumed after the *Sanctus* in the earliest Syrian Liturgies closest to the time of the Apostles, and certainly filled with Apostolic traditions. What follows has been abbreviated and slightly adapted from the continuation of that Prayer in the Apostolic Constitutions VIII (xiii). It is not of course assumed that these are the very words Peter must have used, but they indicate the earliest liturgical traditions we have, since we can definitely prove that the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions drew largely from first-century sources.

ing us constantly onward towards the supreme moment of Consecration.

For an instant there rises a mist before the eyes of the great Apostle, and we can well guess the thoughts that flash through his mind, but which may not distract him from his great duty in that constantly progressing Action, while the Faithful are eagerly attending to his every word. Yet he knows there will be present here before him once more the selfsame Christ whose steps he followed in Galilee, whom he denied in the court of the High Priest, who forgave him in his repentance, and who appeared to him in the glorious Resurrection, making him the first of all the Apostles privileged to see his Risen Lord.

Quickly, therefore, Peter now passes,[3] in his continued Eucharistic Prayer, over the life of the Word Incarnate, recalling His Birth, His holy living, His sacred teaching, His signs and wonders, His cures and

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[3] After the long and triumphant Preface this portion of the primitive Canon was much simpler than our own. The latter, in its present expanded form, goes back to Pope St. Gregory I, who died in 604. Allowing for subsequent modifications, it can even be traced back close to the year 400.

The commemoration for the living made before the Consecration in the Roman Liturgy, was combined in the early Church with the commemoration of the dead (*Memento*) and that of the Saints (*Nobis quoque*), and all these occurred together after the Consecration. Of this there is no doubt. In the Mass of St. Peter the triple Commemoration will, therefore, occur after the Consecration, where we shall again refer to it.

The narrative of the Lord's Supper, which we still possess in our Mass, has existed from the beginning in all liturgies, but was in the early Church preceded by a fuller account of the life of Christ, as indicated above.

benefits wrought for mankind, and so His manifestation of the glory of the Father whose Will He came to fulfill.

With an act of gratitude, therefore, for all these favors, giving thanks, "not as we ought but as we can," [4] for such unspeakable benefits, Peter turns back to "the night in which He was betrayed," [5] and now slowly and solemnly recounts the events of the Institution, pronouncing with utmost reverence, clearly and distinctly Christ's own words of Institution that effect the Transubstantiation of the bread and the wine. With bated breath, intensely, the Christians follow every sacred syllable, as he says:

"And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke and gave to them, and said: Take ye.

'This is My Body.'

"And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And He said to them:

'This is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many.'" [6]

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[4] Apostolic Constitutions VIII (xiii).

[5] The account of the Last Supper is of course included in every liturgy, but an Eastern rite can always be distinguished from a Western rite by the introductory words, which in the East were always substantially as quoted above, *in qua nocte tradebatur*, while in the West they were, *pridie quam pateretur*, "the night before He suffered."

[6] Taken verbatim from Mark (xiv, 22–24). Since the Gospel written by St. Mark is known to be drawn directly from St. Peter's own account, as repeatedly heard by the Evangelist, it seems best to

What we have here beheld the Apostle doing is nothing else than what he himself had seen his Divine Master do on the night of the Last Supper, when to all His Apostles, and to the Bishops and priests who should succeed them in their ministry, Christ gave the command that the Rite He had here instituted must thereafter be performed by them in memory of Him — precisely, in all essentials, as He had performed it Himself. Immediately, therefore, Peter adds the further words of Christ:

"*This do ye for a commemoration of Me.*

For as often as you shall eat of this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come." [7]

These last thoughts, about which the whole Mass revolves, Peter now most naturally expands, dwelling on the Passion and Death of Christ, which we are thus commanded to commemorate by the Rite Christ instituted. It is for this one reason that the Christians

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give this solemn passage in the record authentically and immediately derived from St. Peter, although he may in fact have used a more ample formula in the Divine Sacrifice.

From the differences between the liturgical wording and the text of the Gospels Poelzl argues that the liturgical formulae used in the Consecration must go back to the Apostolic Age, since no one thereafter would have dared to introduce the slightest alterations in the text of the Bible.

[7] Taken from St. Paul (I Cor. xi, 25, 26). It is not to be concluded that St. Mark records all that St. Peter taught, or that he was wont to include in the Holy Sacrifice. These words occurring in the Mass today, are found also in the various early Syrian rites that go for their origin back to the primitive Mass of the Apostles. The entire quotation from St. Paul, as given above, is part of the liturgy in Apostolic Constitutions VIII (xiii).

are gathered together now, and for this same reason will they continue so to gather to the end of time.

The Passion and Death are now set off, not merely by the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, but also by the glorious Second Coming of our Saviour to judge the living and the dead. So, finally, then, the celebrant presents the undying Victim before him upon the altar, "this Bread and this Chalice," which are now truly, really, substantially the Body and Blood of Christ, to the Eternal Father, that He may look down propitiously upon these gifts, which alone are infinitely worthy of His Divine regard.[8]

Already in the Prayer of the Faithful, before the *Agape,* Peter had sent up petitions for all classes of men. Now, with the Incarnate Word bodily present before him, he once more resumes this thought, briefly but in a still more explicit way. He prays for the Church and her hierarchy, the Apostles and the

[8] The prayer I have described above is known in the East as the *Anamnesis,* "memorial," with us as the *Unde et memores.* It is followed in the East by an invocation of the Holy Ghost, called the *Epiklesis.* This is not foreshadowed here because it did not belong to the primitive Church, but is first noted in the fourth century. In it the Holy Spirit is asked to make "the bread the Precious Body and the contents of the chalice the Precious Blood." This does not mean, as it has been wrongly interpreted, that the Consecration takes place at that point, but that here, just as in other rites (e.g., Baptism), the object of the rite continues to be petitioned for after it has already been attained, for the simple reason that the entire Consecration Prayer is to be regarded as *one* Prayer, petitioning one supreme effect, intended throughout the entire Prayer, but which can be attained only at just one period, namely at Christ's own words of Institution: "This is My Body," "This is the Chalice of My Blood," spoken by the priest in the name of Christ.

chosen clergy on whom they have laid their consecrating hands; for the Faithful here and throughout the world; for rulers and their subjects, that all men may live in peace and concord.

But mindful, too, that it is a holy and wholesome thought, as the Scripture teaches, to pray for the dead, he does not fail, at this important moment, to recommend these to Almighty God, and in particular the souls of all the brethren and sisters of this Congregation who rest in the peace of Christ. No thought, indeed, could be nearer to the hearts of these first Christian men and women than that of their own dear departed whom they remember with Christ-like affection.

But from this thought Peter turns inevitably to the legion of the Saints above, to the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Martyrs, and all the host of the just, praying that he too, although most unworthy, and the brethren participating with him in this Divine Sacrifice, and the Faithful throughout the world, may be united with them in eternal glory, and that all men may be brought by grace to the everlasting company of the saved, through Jesus Christ, "to Him be glory and empire for ever and ever." And all the people answer: "Amen." [9]

[9] The intercessory prayers for the living and the dead, which now occur in different parts of the Roman Canon, were formerly united, as was stated in a previous note. The complete intercessory prayer originally remembered both the living and the dead, and then passed on to the Saints in glory. To commemorate particular names, however, *diptychs* were used at an early period, in the shape of double tablets, or a "folder," one leaf containing the names of the living, the other the names of the dead. These were apparently the

So around this humble altar are united the souls on earth, in Purgatory, and in Heaven; the Church Militant, Suffering, and Triumphant; the whole Communion of the Saints. Earth is enriched, Purgatory relieved, Heaven rejoiced.

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first written documents that appeared at the altar. The words of St. Peter quoted here from his First Epistle (v, 11) are doubtless liturgical and occurred in his Masses. To St. Peter's intercessory prayer corresponds the Great Intercession of the Greek Liturgies.

THE COMMUNION IN ST. PETER'S MASS

THE sublime Eucharistic Prayer, with its twofold Consecration, its thanksgivings and intercessions, has been completed.

As a fitting sequence to this, and as a truly appropriate preparation for the Holy Communion, which is now to follow, Peter in a short preface recalls how Christ Himself has taught us that we should dare invoke Almighty God under the tender and most intimate name of "Our Father."

With one voice and one impulse, therefore, the Faithful break forth aloud into that Prayer which implies not merely the infinite condescension of God toward us, but also the universal brotherhood of all mankind under that Divine Fatherhood, so that we are taught to intercede for all alike. It is the expression, in a particular way, of that charity and zeal which Christ would daily perfect in us through the Holy Eucharist. It is the Prayer, most suited, therefore, to be made the introduction for that great Mystery in its sacramental form. It is a Communion Prayer also in the sense that in it we constantly ask of God to give us "our daily bread" — the bread

indeed, of our mortal bodies; but above all things, the spiritual, supernatural, and Eucharistic Bread which is to be the food of our souls.

We may well presume that this supreme Prayer was never or seldom omitted in the Masses said by the Apostles, and we behold the fervor with which the first Christians are taught to recite it aloud during this solemn part of the Divine Sacrifice.[1]

We have thus entered now upon a new part of our Eucharistic Service. All here centers in the Communion, as the Eucharistic Prayer centered in the Consecration. The very next action which we behold Peter performing is the Fraction, or Breaking of the Consecrated Bread.

Taking in both his hands one of the Sacred Loaves,

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[1] It is true that this Prayer is not found in all the early "Church Orders" that convey to us the traditions of the first centuries, but apparently its use is considered too obvious to have required any mention. As a similar instance I may call attention to the fact that the "Fraction," or Breaking of the Consecrated Bread, is also not mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, yet most certainly took place then as at all times, being part of Christ's own action at the Last Supper.

In all the Eastern Churches the Our Father is still recited aloud by the people in common during their Liturgy, and follows the Eucharistic Prayer as above. In the Roman Mass it was transferred to its present position by St. Gregory I. The short preface to the Our Father, at which I have hinted, goes back to the early centuries. At the end of the Lord's Prayer there is usually an "Embolism," i.e. an expansion of the last petition, "But deliver us from evil," as in the Roman Mass today and in most Eastern rites.

The Byzantine Liturgy closes the Lord's Prayer with the formula: "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," which is also found at the end of this Prayer in the first-century "Didache," although with the omission of the word "kingdom."

over which the words of Consecration had been spoken, Peter with great reverence and profound solemnity breaks it into two parts, precisely as he had seen Christ perform this very action before giving Communion to His Apostles, and as again the journeying disciples had witnessed it at Emmaus. Looking on this sacred and deeply moving rite we are not surprised that the impression made by it on the minds of these first Christians should have been so strong and vivid that they gave its name to the entire Divine Sacrifice, calling it, "The Breaking of Bread."

But the hands of Peter are busy now, over the gilded salver, breaking into smaller and smaller particles the Consecrated Loaves, so that there may be enough Sacred Particles to communicate all those present. During this action all the Faithful join in a soul-stirring canticle, which still more fires their hearts with eager longing for the Saviour-God whom they are so soon to receive into their breasts.

Then, "*Maran atha*," a deep rich voice sounds forth in the ancient Aramaic, "Our Lord comes." And "*Maran atha. Amen*," the entire congregation answers with intense enthusiasm. It is indeed a sublime moment deeply to be remembered.

With prayerful devotion Peter has by this time performed his sacred action. Holding in his hand a single Particle of the Consecrated Bread, he says: "Grace be to you and peace." At which the people answer: "And with thy spirit." He next breaks off a small Fragment and allows it to drop into the Consecrated Wine and to mingle there with it. The action

recalls to him what he had beheld Christ Himself performing at the Last Supper, when He dipped a piece of bread to indicate the betrayer saying: "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped." [2] It was not the Eucharist which Christ there reached to Judas, but may there be no one here who would approach that Mystery itself unworthily!

"Holy things to the holy," Peter exclaims, as he lifts up the Consecrated Particle he has in his hands. It is the first and only Elevation for the people that we have seen in Peter's Mass, and it directly precedes the Holy Communion. Wherefore in common the Faithful show their faith by now exclaiming in turn:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! The Lord is God. Hosanna in the highest!" [3]

Peter's own Communion follows. There are no previous private prayers said by him, since his action is all in public and his words are spoken aloud for the people who participate with him.[4]

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[2] John xiii, 26.

[3] These are exclamations taken from the earliest Syrian Liturgy. The full exclamation, as found in the Apostolic Constitutions VIII at this point, in answer to the Bishop's "Holy things to the holy," is:

"One sole Holy, one sole Lord, one sole Jesus Christ, for the glory of God the Father, blessed for evermore. Amen. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men. Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! The Lord is God; He has manifested Himself to us. Hosanna in the highest!" Part of this is still recited in the Eastern Churches today.

[4] The *Agnus Dei* is a relic of the canticle sung during the breaking of the Consecrated Bread, which in the early Church took a considerable time. The three silent prayers said by the priest today before his own Communion, beautiful as they are, have no antecedents in

But we can now better feel than describe the intensity of that fervor wherewith Peter receives the Christ he so greatly loves and for whom he will yield up his very life on the cross, as did his Divine Master, asking only that he may be fastened to it head downward, because he is not worthy to die in the same posture as did his Lord and Saviour. We do not wonder, therefore, that without deliberation the words now break forth from him " Lord, I am not worthy." Yet with firm hand the Consecrated Particle is lifted to his lips. So, too, he partakes of the Chalice of that Blood which was shed for him, and in his heart he prays that it may be applied to the souls of all men. Gladly a million times would he pour forth his own blood for the love of Christ and to win souls for Him.

But the people, too, are now prepared and approach for their Holy Communion. And first Mark himself stands before Peter and receives in his outstretched right hand a particle of the Consecrated Bread. Next to him is a cantor. Then the people follow: the men, the women and the children.

Mark, however, has gone to the altar where he places his right hand on it and communicates himself, then he takes up the Consecrated Chalice and applies

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the first centuries when the entire Mass, including the Canon, was recited aloud by the Bishop, as representative of the people. The Kiss of Peace among the clergy, which in a Solemn Mass now follows the second of these prayers, has already been given before the *Agape* by all the Faithful to each other in St. Peter's Mass. At the time of St. Justin, about the year 150, it occupied the same corresponding place, but with the omission of the *Agape*. The early Roman rite, therefore, did not differ from that of St. Peter described above.

it to his lips. One moment of profound adoration, of burning love, and with that fire still in his heart he goes to hold the Chalice to the lips of those who have already communicated themselves with the Consecrated Bread placed in their right hand by Peter.

"The Body of Christ," Peter says as he places the Particles in the eager hand of each recipient, and the answer comes back, as an act of living faith: "Amen." Similarly Mark before each Communion with the Chalice says: "The Blood of Christ," and the answer of the communicant is: "Amen." [5]

The people, as we notice, all receive standing, but many sink on their knees after receiving, or had risen from their knees before Communion began. In the mean time the cantor has returned to his place, and while the Faithful are receiving we can hear his clear tones ringing out as he sings the thirty-third Psalm, with one of its verses repeated as the refrain to be chanted by the people:

"I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall be always in my mouth.

"In the Lord shall my soul be praised,
Let the meek hear and rejoice.

"O magnify the Lord with me,
And let us extol His Name together.

[5] These again are the forms in our earliest Syrian documents. Being the simplest of all and the earliest we know, they may not unlikely have been used by the Apostles. Similar forms, with the same reply, remained in later use.

" *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet,*
Blessed is the man that hopeth in Him.

" Fear the Lord, all ye His saints,
For there is no want to them that fear Him.

" The rich have wanted and have suffered hunger,
But they that seek the Lord shall be deprived of no good.

" Come, children, hearken to me,
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

" *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet,*
Blessed is the man that hopeth in Him." [6]

The Communion is followed by the ablution of the chalice. The Precious Blood has all been received in Holy Communion, but sacred particles of the Consecrated Bread are conserved especially for the sick or those in prison.

Thanksgiving is now made aloud by St. Peter. All the congregation unites itself with him as he thanks the Infinite Goodness of God for himself and all present for having been deemed worthy to participate in the Sacred Mysteries. May this Holy Communion increase in them faith and fervor and cleanse them of their faults. Then he offers thanks for all who have been thus united with the Only-Begotten of the

[6] Psalm xxxiii is prescribed in the early Liturgy to be chanted during the Communion. A fuller explanation of Communion in the Early Church will be given in a special chapter.

Father, and segregated from the society of the wicked, while he asks that the Holy Spirit may come down upon them, both to supply whatever is still wanting and confirm whatever is good in them. So, too, he prays for all classes and states of society: for rulers, magistrates and subjects he asks that they may conscientiously fulfil their duties, for priests he implores sanctity, for virgins, chastity; for spouses, fidelity; for the newly baptized, perseverance; for those under preparation, light and grace, that so all may be gathered together into the Kingdom of God, in Christ Jesus. "To Him be glory now and unto the day of eternity." And the people answer: "Amen." [7]

Before the parting of the people alms are taken up, which will be distributed through those appointed for this task. Widows and orphans are particularly to be borne in mind. The love of God in these Christian souls overflows with charity towards the neighbor in his temporal as well as spiritual needs.

It is not to be supposed, however, that these first Christians had sold all their possessions, much less that this was required of them. The very house in which we now worship is still the property of Mary, the mother of Mark, but as mistress of the house, she gladly places both it and her household at the service of the Apostles. The Christian Communism we here behold consists mainly in being freely and generously

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[7] The quotation at the end is from II Peter (iii, 18). The summary of the thanksgiving prayer here offered was suggested by the Bishop's Post-Communion Invocation in Apostolic Constitutions VIII (xv).

ready to help others in their need. Yet in the beginning great sacrifices had often been brought, even to the sale of property, that it might serve as a charity fund in the hands of the Apostles.

The Faithful continue in their united prayers until the time for the Blessing has come. This is most solemnly invoked upon them by Peter, who lifts his hands on high and says, as the people bow down humbly or sink upon their knees:

" Omnipotent, true and infinite God, who art present everywhere, near unto all, and inhabitest light inaccessible; whom all shall find that seek devoutly; God of Israel, of all Thy people who hold the truth and believe in Christ, Thy Son; propitiously hear us for Thy Name's sake, and bless these who humbly bow before Thee; grant them all the petitions of their heart which will be for their good and cast not forth from Thy Kingdom any one of them that here are Thy own.

" Sanctify, guard, protect, and assist them, and do Thou liberate them from their foes; preserve their homes, and keep safe in Thy care their coming and their going forth; because to Thee is glory, praise, majesty and worship; and to Thy Son Jesus Christ, Our Lord, God and King; and to the Holy Ghost; now and forever, and for ages of ages." [8]

[8] Considerably abbreviated and adapted from the Bishop's Blessing at the end of the Eucharistic Service in the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions VIII (xv). It is highly suggestive of the blessing given in the Apostolic Age, conformably doubtless with the Blessings which the Apostles themselves had been accustomed to witness in the Temple.

At this the people, looking up, say: "Amen."

Then, as they rise, Mark speaks to them the final words: "Go in peace."

But with tender affection they still crowd around Peter and kiss his hand. And with no less eagerness we too press forward to show our homage and devotion to that gentle, humble Vicar of Christ, to whom were committed His lambs and His sheep and were given the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And so, from the lighted house, we pass out into the dark night and the silent streets of the City of Jerusalem. But in our hearts burn bright and strong the fires of the Eucharist.

Documents of the Apostolic Age

"THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES"

IN the year 1873 a discovery of momentous importance was made in the monastery of the Holy Sepulcher at Constantinople. An old manuscript volume was found there. Among the writings contained in it was a copy of a little book which had once been popular in the early Church and is freely quoted in the literature of that period. Like many other treasures, it disappeared from sight and was finally lost in the course of the centuries.

The book was discovered by the Greek Metropolitan Bryennios, who ten years later published it, producing a sensation in the theological world. It is now generally believed to have been written sometime between the years 80 and 100 of our era. Certainly it is the earliest Church manual in our possession. Eminent authorities consider it to be in fact the oldest Christian work extant, after the New Testament itself.

The book is known under the significant title, "The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles," in Greek "Didache," which is the abbreviated form commonly in

use. St. Athanasias, who died as late as the year 373, still mentions it in connection with the canonical Scriptures — not as included among them, but as a work which "the Fathers appointed to be read by those who have lately approached the Church and are eager to be instructed and to learn pious doctrine" (Ep. xxxix).

What particularly interests us here is the information contained in it regarding the Eucharist. This information was in no way meant to be complete. The essentials of the Liturgy, in which the reader of that day had been carefully drilled, are purposely omitted, as also any reference to the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the account of which could be gathered from the Scripture. Much, however, can be learned from the tiny volume.

The regular day for the assembly of the Faithful is given there as Sunday, "the Lord's Day," when all were present at the Eucharistic Sacrifice and received Holy Communion, after having first made their confession "in church" and composed whatever quarrels they may have had with each other. The Mass was doubtless still referred to at that time as the Breaking of Bread, but the word Eucharist ("Thanksgiving") was fast coming into common use.

This word, it is true, was not then applied in the same general way in which it now continues to be used, making it include everything pertaining to both the Sacrifice and the Sacrament as instituted by Christ. Instead it was used in a more restricted sense, so that "The Eucharist," or as we should translate it from

the Greek, " The Thanksgiving," substantially signified exactly the same thing as did " The Breaking of Bread," or as now does " The Mass " in the West and " The Liturgy " in the East. They are different terms for essentially one and the same thing. Words change, but the Divine Sacrifice is ever the same.

The appropriateness of the name " Eucharist " for the Mass then lay in the great importance attached to the prayer of Thanksgiving, by which was really understood, as we have seen, the Preface and Canon of the Roman Liturgy combined, or what is the equivalent of this combination in the Eastern Church, the *Anaphora*, which precisely corresponds at the present day to the first-century Eucharistic Prayer. Both Eastern and Western Church are thus in full accord with the first-century traditions and have preserved the very name of " Eucharist."

The expressions, " to break bread " and " to give thanks " are found grouped together in the following quotation from the " Didache," which lays down for these early Christians the duty of hearing Mass on Sunday, with the understanding that they should also confess and go to Communion:

" On every Day of the Lord [Sunday], after assembling, *break bread and give thanks* [i.e. offer the Divine Sacrifice], after you have confessed your sins that your *Sacrifice* be pure. Let no one who has a quarrel with his brother appear with you until after reconciliation, so that your Sacrifice may be undefiled. For the Lord hath said: ' In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation,

for my name is great among the Gentiles'" (xiv, 1, 2).

Written in the Apostolic Age, this expresses the doctrine intelligible to every Catholic today. Even the Prophecy of Malachias (i, 11), on the Sacrifice of the Mass, is quoted precisely as it may be found in any modern Catholic work upon the same subject.

The doctrinal importance of this passage cannot be overlooked by anyone. We are left in no doubt that the author, in common with his fellow Christians of Apostolic times, saw in the Mass a true Sacrifice. "That your Sacrifice be pure," he says, and again "that your Sacrifice may be undefiled."

In the next place there is the confession to be made in the church. How this took place is not told, but the fact entirely suffices. The Christians are to participate most intimately in the Sacrifice, for it was the universal practice of the early Church that everyone who attended Mass also went to Holy Communion. Like the Catholics of our own day they are careful to purify their conscience by a previous confession. Weekly confession is still the custom of Catholics who communicate frequently.

Confession, however, is not necessary where grievous sin does not exist. We know that even to gain all the indulgences, daily communicants are not now obliged to go to confession every week. Yet they obviously wish to do so, if this can reasonably be possible.

Thirdly, we behold here the regular Sunday Mass to which we find reference in the Holy Scripture, and

which has continued unbroken down to our own day. That all the Faithful should also communicate at this is no less the desire of the Church today.

But we find in this document another Eucharistic passage of particular interest because of its uniqueness. It consists of two prayers preceded by their proper rubrics. Enough has already been said of the relation of the synagogue services to the introductory part of the Mass, and of the freedom with which the Apostles most rightly availed themselves of what was really their own legitimate heritage, Christianizing it and adding to it, as its culmination, the New Rite which Christ Himself had instituted.

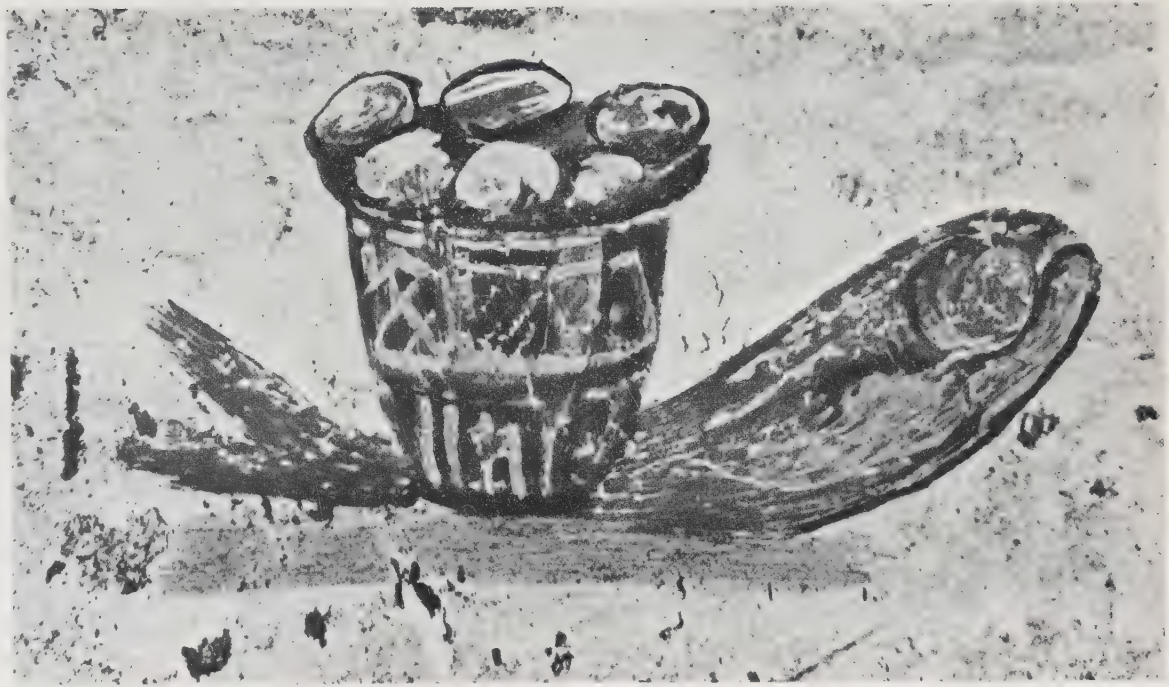
In the same manner we now have in the "Didache" two prayers which evidently were suggested by a Jewish blessing of bread and wine, the formulas for which can still be found in the *Berakhoth* ("Blessings") of the *Mishna* (chapter vi).

These prayers, it is clear, were said between the Consecration and the Communion of the Mass, for it is definitely stated that the Bread was already broken, which would be true only after the Consecration had taken place. I am giving the rubrics as I may call them, of this early Liturgy, in italics, while the prayers themselves appear in ordinary type:

"*Concerning the Eucharist render thanks thus:*

"*First for the Cup:* We give thanks to Thee, Our Father, for the holy vine of Thy servant David, which Thou hast shown us through Thy Servant Jesus. Glory be to Thee forever.

"*But for the broken Bread:* We give thanks to



FISH WITH EUCHARISTIC SPECIES. *Crypt of Lucina, Catacomb of Callixtus*

Painted close to Apostolic Age. Fish (Ichthus) represents Christ. Basket contains wine and loaves. Interpretation, See pp. 276–279. Reproduction of this and subsequent two plates after Wilpert.

Thee, Our Father, for the life and wisdom Thou hast shown us through Thy Servant Jesus. Glory be to Thee forever.

"As this broken Bread was scattered over the hills and was gathered together and made one, so may the Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom. For Thine is the glory and power through Jesus Christ forever" (ix, 1–4).

As already implied, the expression "broken Bread," used above, is exactly the same as today is the expression "consecrated Bread," since both terms definitely indicate that the Consecration has preceded. Only after this act was the Bread (i.e. the species of bread) broken, then as now.

The loaf, now changed into the Body of Christ, had originally been composed of countless grains gathered from all the hills where the wheat once waved and rippled in the sun. So into God's Church were to be assembled in countless numbers the people from the ends of the earth to form one Kingdom, one Mystic Body of Christ. Such is the beautiful Eucharistic symbolism which the early Church always kept well in mind. The writer then continues:

"But let no one eat or drink of our Eucharist except those who are baptized in the name of Jesus. For because of this the Lord said: Do not give holy things to dogs" (ix, 5).

Nothing could be more clear than that there is question here of the true Body and Blood of Christ. Patristic writers, it may be mentioned in this place, frequently use the word "Bread" in reference to the

species of the Bread that still remains after the Consecration, precisely as we use the word " Host," fully understanding that it is the Lord Himself who *alone* is present under the outward accidents. Those not familiar with this usage are at times confused by it.

While the earliest date credibly assigned to this document is the year 80, yet the prayers I have quoted must have been familiar before that time, and were evidently in use when this booklet was composed. Apparently they were purely local and soon completely disappeared. Yet even here we meet with expressions that sound familiar to us, such as " Glory be to Thee forever," and " Through Jesus Christ, etc."

Notice may have been taken of a peculiar inversion of the order, the Chalice being mentioned before the broken Bread. Whatever explanation may be given for this strange inversion, we would not be justified in drawing from it the conclusion that the same inversion took place in the Consecration itself. Neither in the Scriptures nor anywhere in all Christian liturgy is such an inversion to be found, but in alluding to the twofold Consecration writers at times mention that of the wine first. We find this particularly the case in St. Irenaeus, yet he perfectly understands the correct liturgical order.

The Our Father is not mentioned as recited at the Mass, but may be taken for granted, as are the acts of Consecration. It is in fact given entire, immediately after the Mass account, and so seems to be connected in the compiler's mind with it. At the conclusion of

the Lord's Prayer we have the doxology: "for Thine is the power and the glory for ever" (viii, 2). The Faithful are then instructed to recite the prayer three times a day.

The same document, in another place, also contains a thanksgiving prayer which really corresponds to our Preface, without the dialogue. The absence of the latter would be no indication that it was not used, in one way or other, during the days of the Apostles. The liturgy given in the "Didache" is too local and incomplete for any such conclusions. What I may here call the Preface occurs in the tenth chapter of the "Didache" and follows close upon the *Agape*, as is clearly implied in the words introducing it: "After you are filled give thanks in this wise."

The *Agape* in Apostolic days immediately preceded the Mass proper, as we have seen, and only towards the beginning of the second century took its place after the entire eucharistic celebration. It was then no longer to be considered as a liturgical act. This would be another evidence of the antiquity of the "Didache," if further evidence were needed.

It is interesting to note more in detail the transition here made from the *Agape*, or earthly banquet, to the Communion or heavenly feast. Thus thanks is given to God for the bodily food and drink bestowed by Him upon all men, but in particular for an entirely different food bestowed upon the Faithful only: "spiritual food, and drink, and life everlasting." This clearly alludes to the words of Christ: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlast-

ing life and I will raise him up on the last day" (John vi, 55).

Here, then, in its entirety, is this earliest Christian "Preface" in our possession, together with the introductory rubric:

"*After you are filled* [i.e. after the *Agape*] *give thanks in this wise:*

"We thank Thee, O Holy Father for Thy Holy Name, which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge, and faith, and immortality, which Thou hast shown us through Thy Servant Jesus. Glory be to Thee for ever.

"Thou, Almighty God, hast created all things for Thy Name's sake; Thou hast given food and drink to men that partaking of it they may render thanks to Thee; and to us Thou hast given spiritual food, and drink, and life everlasting, through Thy Servant.

"Above all we thank Thee for that Thou art Mighty. Glory be to Thee for ever.

"Remember, O Lord, Thy Church to free her from all evil and make her perfect in Thy Love; gather her from the four winds and make her holy in Thy kingdom which Thou hast prepared for her; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever.

"Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David. If any one be holy let him approach; if he be not, let him repent, *Maran atha.* Amen (x, 1–7).

The summons at the end is for all to approach the Holy Table, when the time of Communion shall come, but it carefully reminds them that for this they

must be in the state of grace. The sacred action, including the Consecration and followed by the Communion, must have then succeeded directly upon this prayer.

Maran atha is an Aramaic expression taken to mean, as we have previously said, "Our Lord comes." It can in fact be made a most fervent Communion prayer in itself — an act of living faith in the Divine Presence, an act of hope that we shall receive all bounties with the coming of the Eucharistic God, and an act of charity or love because it expresses the longings of the soul for Him. *Maran atha!* Christ Our Lord comes to us!

We have retained in our Mass two of the three foreign words used in this short passage, namely: "Hosanna" and "Amen." They have in fact become naturalized in our modern languages. It seems a pity that we have lost that other beautiful expression which is so rich in its content.

But there is much else in the last prayer which is familiar to us. Thus one of the most striking sentences in our liturgy of the Mass is the expression in our *Gloria:* "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory." Yet precisely this same turn of thought will be found in our thanksgiving prayer of the first century. There it runs: "We give Thee thanks because Thou art mighty. Glory to Thee forever!"

To sum up all that has so far been said in this chapter, we have here certain official liturgical prayers, though probably confined to a limited number of churches in a definite locality. Sunday is seen to be

the day when all the faithful hear Mass and receive Communion. The Mass is declared to be a true sacrifice. Baptism and confession of the sins committed thereafter are required as a condition for receiving the Eucharist. Incidentally, we learn of Christ's visible Kingdom, the Church made up of many members from all parts of the earth, and are told of the appointment of " bishops and worthy deacons " who shall serve the altar. The *Agape* still precedes the Eucharist.

But there is another ritual reference in the " Didache " that must not be overlooked. It is contained in a brief sentence that follows the long prayer of thanksgiving which I have just given:

" But let the prophets give thanks as much as they will " (x, 7).

Perhaps the reader may at once sense the significance of these words. They imply that the liturgy from which the author of the " Didache " quoted belonged to the period of transition from what has been appropriately called the liturgy of the Holy Ghost to the more set and formal liturgy of later days. It is midway between the earliest Apostolic times when the prayer of the celebrant depended largely on the inspiration of the moment, and the next few centuries when Mass-books and *euchologia* had indeed not yet been written for use at the altar, but when the entire liturgy was becoming crystallized in the West and in the East.

In the present instance, set prayers are already assigned, and yet the " prophets " are still free, as in an

earlier period of the same Apostolic times, to speak out in public, during the Divine Service. They may utter the thoughts wherewith the Holy Ghost inspires them. But in the rather minute liturgical descriptions that come to us from the second century no trace is any longer left of this. As Monsignor Duchesne wrote:

"It is evident that this ritual and these formularies come to us from a sphere widely different from that in which St. Justin and Clement composed their writings — from a sphere in which intense enthusiasm still prevailed. The prophets played an important role. . . . The inspiration could be felt. It sent a thrill through the souls of certain privileged persons. But the whole assembly was moved, edified, and even more or less ravished by it and transported into a Divine sphere of the Paraclete."

The liturgical details given in the "Didache" may perhaps be best described as an eddy that formed outside of the normal current of liturgical development. The course of the latter we shall now follow through the period that is still regarded as belonging to the Apostolic Age. The two great Fathers of the Church to whom reference must be made in this connection are St. Clement of Rome, who died in the year 98, and St. Ignatius of Antioch, whose martyrdom took place in the year 107.

EPISTLE OF THIRD SUCCESSOR OF ST. PETER

AFTER the " Didache " the earliest link in the history of the Mass is supplied us in the writings of St. Clement of Rome. He was the third successor of St. Peter in the Pontifical Chair, and like all the first Popes, bore witness to the Faith in his blood. His martyrdom took place before the death of the last of the Apostles.

St. Clement's First Letter to the Corinthians, written probably about the year 93, is a treasured document, which was held less sacred only than the inspired Scriptures themselves, and in fact was long read in the churches during the early Christian period. In it we have many allusions to the Holy Sacrifice.

Evidently referring to some unwritten tradition of those Apostolic days, he tells us that Christ Himself " commanded that the offerings and services should be performed, not rashly nor in disorder, but at fixed times and hours." He further insists that each one must exactly observe " the appointed order of his services," which of course applies in a particular way to the Mass. " The Bishops," he writes, " have their own services designated, the priests are assigned their

special places, and the deacons have their duties" (xl, 2–5). Finally mention is made of the laity as distinct from the clerical hierarchy: "The layman is bound by lay laws" (xl, 5). All this in the Apostolic Age!

Mass, as we know, was at first ordinarily said by the Bishop and not by the priest, although the latter was next in dignity to him. The deacon seems from early times to have been entrusted with giving the Holy Communion with the Chalice. In the later Eastern Church we find this connection of the deacon with the Chalice almost intimately observed, down to the minutest details. St. Justin, however, at about the middle of the second century, says of this order:

"They whom we call deacons distribute to those present [at the Divine Sacrifice] and carry to the absent the Bread and the Wine mingled with water that have been consecrated" (*Apol.* I, 65). Literally, the word used by him is "eucharisted" which, as we shall later see, implies here a true Consecration — the conversion of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Particularly notable are the various liturgical formulae, still in use today, which occur in the writings of St. Clement. Thus in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, just mentioned, we have a long prayer, which is evidently of a liturgical character. Its concluding words are addressed to the Father "through Jesus Christ, the High Priest and Ruler of our souls, through whom glory and majesty be to Thee, now

and for generations of generations, and ages of ages. Amen" (lxi, 3).

It is a prayer of Thanksgiving, corresponding, like that of the "Didache," to our Preface, and therefore representing the introductory part of the Eucharistic Prayer or *Anaphora*. With more or less frequent variants, as the spirit or the occasion prompted, it must often have been repeated by St. Clement in the Holy Sacrifices offered by him during what we term the Apostolic Age.

To convey to the reader an idea of the magnificent and fervid effusions which the celebrant might pour forth at the altar, without missal or *euchologia* to aid him, in this first century of the Church's history, it will be well to quote more at length from this invaluable treasure of primitive Mass liturgy.

St. Clement, we should note, was himself the disciple of the Apostles, and must frequently in his younger days have listened to the portion of the Thanksgiving Prayer corresponding to the Preface of our day as, with a certain uniformity, it was extemporized in the Masses said by St. Peter or St. Paul. May we not then presume that here, in substance at least, we have a very echo of the Eucharistic Prayers of these great Apostles?

The following translation from the original Greek contains the main body of the prayer, which opens with an indirect invocation of the Creator of all things. His Divine aid is implored in our own familiar way: "through His well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, by whom He has called us from darkness to light,

from ignorance to the knowledge of the glory of His Name." The great Pontiff, whose Epistle was to be read for centuries thereafter in the churches of Corinth, then continues:

" Grant us, O Lord, to hope in Thy Name, from whom every creature proceeds. Thou hast opened the eyes of our hearts that we may know Thee, Thou the sole Highest among the highest, the Holy One resting in the midst of the holy; Thou who humblest the insolence of the proud, and scatterest the devices of the people, who exaltest the humble and puttest down the mighty; Thou who conferest riches and poverty, life and death, sole Benefactor of spirits, God of all flesh; Thou whose regard penetrates the abyss and scans the works of men; Thou who art our help in danger, Thou who savest us from despair, Creator and Overseer of all spirits; Thou who hast multiplied all the nations upon earth, and from among all men choosest out those who love Thee, through Jesus Christ, Thy well-beloved Son, by whom Thou hast instructed, sanctified and honored us.

" We beseech Thee, O Master, be our Helper and Defender. Save those of us who are in tribulation; take pity on the lowly, raise up the fallen, reveal Thyself to those who are in need, heal the ungodly, and restore those of Thy people who have wandered into error, relieve those who are in want, deliver those of us who suffer in prison, raise up the feeble, comfort the faint-hearted, that all the nations may know that Thou only art God, that Jesus Christ is Thy Son,

and that we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture.

" Thou art He who by Thy works hast made manifest the harmony of the universe through all ages. Thou, Lord, hast created the earth, Thou who remainest faithful throughout all generations, just in Thy judgments, wonderful in Thy might and majesty, wise in creation and provident in preserving the things created; Thou who showest Thy goodness in saving us, Thy faithfulness to those who trust in Thee. O Thou, who art merciful and full of compassion, forgive us our faults, our injustices, our shortcomings, our transgressions.

" Remember not the sins of Thy servants and handmaids, but cleanse us in the cleansing of Thy truth, and direct our steps that we may walk in holiness and righteousness and simplicity of heart, and may do that which is good and well-pleasing before Thee and in the sight of those set over us.

" Yea, O Lord, make Thy face to shine upon us for our blessing with peace and for our protection by Thy mighty hand. Deliver us from every sin by Thy high arm. Save us from those who wrongfully hate us. Give peace and concord to us and to all who dwell upon the earth, as Thou didst give them to our forefathers when devoutly they called upon Thee in faith and truth, that so we may receive Thy salvation, obedient to Thy almighty and all-holy Name, and to our rulers and governors here upon earth " (lix, 3 — lx).

The Preface, then, concludes with another para-

graph in which grace, light and all blessings are petitioned for the temporal rulers. At the same time it brings home the truth that to God alone they owe whatever authority they rightly possess. This part of the prayer is all the more noteworthy in that the Christians were even then on the very eve of the Domitian persecution.

Not merely does the motive of this typical "Preface," or introductory portion of the Thanksgiving Prayer of the first century, still remain the motive of our Preface in the Mass, but we find in another part of the same First Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians, as already previously mentioned, the same triple *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, with which our own Preface terminates today.

What is more, after fully quoting these words derived from Isaias (vi, 3): "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, all creation is full of His glory" (xxxiv, 6), St. Clement definitely states that his readers will recognize this passage as the liturgical formula with which they are all familiar and which they themselves recite aloud in church. "Assembled together," he writes, "we thus cry out in unison with one voice" (xxxiv, 7).

We should observe also that since he writes from Rome to Corinth, he evidently implies that the same custom exists in both places, showing the early uniformity of the Mass Liturgy.

The Roman Preface has been considerably shortened, but the Eastern "Preface," or opening portion of the *Anaphora*, as it should be called, still retains

much at least of its original length. In the former the *Sanctus* is now recited by the priest alone, although its repetition by the choir corresponds to the cry of the united congregation in the first century. In the East the voice of the people is still heard in this Seraphic exclamation. The triple *Sanctus*, it may here be mentioned, is found in nearly all liturgies throughout the centuries.

" It is right at all times and in all places to bless God," Tertullian wrote in the second century, clearly recalling the words of our own Preface, " whom those surrounding choirs of angels address without ceasing: ' Holy, Holy, Holy ' " (*De. Orat.*, iii).

The chance Mass prayers I have quoted as coming down to us from the days of the Apostolic Church are but solitary instances, since such prayers were not ordinarily committed to writing. We have already explained their origin. Extemporized at first they gradually became more and more uniform in theme and finally even in language. So they were orally transmitted from generation to generation. Lastly they found their place in written liturgies.

Studying the first written Mass that has come down to us, and which we find in Apostolic Constitutions VIII, we notice there not merely the same thoughts, words and phrases, in many instances, but even the same sequences as in the Thanksgiving Prayer of St. Clement just quoted here. This is particularly remarkable since the Apostolic Constitutions are in no sense a copy made from the Epistle of St. Clement. What is more remarkable still is that all later Mass

liturgies can be shown to conform *in outline* with the model left us in the Apostolic Constitutions. Thus we see how closely the Masses of Apostolic times are linked with our own, not merely in all their essentials, which can never change, but even in such lesser details.

" Not only do the same ideas occur in the same order," remarks Adrian Fortescue greatly impressed by this similarity, " but there are whole passages, and just those that in the First Epistle of St. Clement have most the appearance of liturgical formulae, that recur word for word in the Apostolic Constitutions."

LETTERS OF MARTYR BISHOP ST. IGNATIUS

TURNING now to St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr, who like St. Clement was a disciple of the Apostles, we find in the seven authentic letters we have from him, the most clear and strong references to the Holy Sacrifice. He is particularly concerned with guarding the Christians against attendance at the eucharistic services of heretics and schismatics. Already at this early age the efforts at the tearing and rending of the seamless Robe of Christ had long ago taken their beginning.

"Be careful," he warns them, "to use one Eucharist. For there is one Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and one Chalice in the unity of His Blood, and one sacrificial Altar, as there is one Bishop, with the priesthood and the deacons" (*Phil.* iv). We see at a glance in what perfect conformity his words stand with those of St. Clement.

Of the schismatical Docetae, who celebrate a eucharist of their own, he writes to the Smyrnians:

"They abstain from the Eucharist and prayers [a combined expression by which he signifies the entire Eucharistic Service of the Faithful] because they do

not acknowledge that the Eucharist is the Flesh of Our Redeemer Jesus Christ, the same [Flesh] which suffered for our sins, and which, through the goodness of God, was raised up again" (*Ad Smyrn.* vi, 1).

We have here a vivid expression for the Real Presence in the Eucharist. As for the schismatics in question, he not merely bids the Faithful to avoid them, but also to refrain from speaking to them "in public or private." It was thus the Apostles and the great Apostolic Fathers abhorred schism and heresy.

"As the Lord did nothing either by Himself or by the Apostles, without the Father," he says elsewhere, "being always united to Him, so do you nothing without the bishop and the presbyters, nor allow anything to be regarded by you as proper if done separately. . . . Come together all of you as to one Temple of God, to one Altar, to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father, was with one Father, and went back to Him" (*Magn.* vii, 1, 2).

Thus to these enlightened writers of Apostolic days, the Eucharist is not merely a symbol but the full reality of the Body and Blood of Christ, and a center of Christian unity. It is precisely what St. Paul had already so well expressed when he wrote: "For we being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one Bread" (I Cor. x, 17).

Forcibly St. Ignatius emphasizes this thought of the Apostles when writing to the Philadelphians he says:

"I beseech you that you hold fast by one Faith and one Teacher, and take part in one and the same Eu-

charist. For as there is but one Flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one Blood which He has shed for us, so also is there but One Bread broken and one Chalice for the whole Church."

Thus the Eucharist becomes for him in all truth the great bond of Christian unity, and with decisive words he condemns those who would presume to offer up the Holy Sacrifice without due episcopal authorization: "For no one can licitly celebrate except the Bishop, and those authorized by him for that purpose." He never in fact tires of insisting that all things, and especially those pertaining to the great Mystery of Faith, must be done in union with the Bishop (*Ad Eph.* iv, i, 2; *Ad Smyrn.* viii, i, etc.).

But on the other hand he urges the Faithful, with all his strength, to the frequent attendance at Mass and reception of Holy Communion. "Be careful," he counsels the Ephesians, "to approach often to the Eucharist, for the glory of God. If ye do this with devotion the powers of Satan will be expelled, who perverts all that he does into fiery arrows in order to effect sin." And, finally, in the conclusion of the same letter, St. Ignatius pens this pithy eucharistic exhortation which deserves to be well remembered:

"Break ye the Bread which is the source of eternal salvation; a means of preservation against death, and of life through Jesus Christ in God; a medicine which will expel all evil within us" (*Ad Eph.* xx, 2).

In precisely this same spirit and tone was the Decree on Frequent and Daily Communion written, which in our own age Pope Pius X promulgated

throughout the universal Church. The Eucharist is not given us as a reward of virtue, we are there taught, but as an aid and remedy, and it is precisely because of our weakness, therefore, that we are to approach most frequently, and if possible, daily. To wait until we are worthy would mean that we could never approach. All that is required, as has been officially set forth by the Holy See, is a proper intention and freedom from any consciousness of mortal sin.

It was from the Eucharist that St. Ignatius drew his own heroic strength. Condemned to be devoured by the wild beasts in the Flavian amphitheater, he had but one fear, that they might not attack him. But if so, he himself would end their hesitation:

" May I have joy of the beasts that have been prepared for me, and I pray that I may find them ready. Nay, I will entice them that they may devour me quickly, and not as they have done to some, refusing to touch them through fear. Yea, though of themselves they should not be willing while I am ready, I myself will force them to it " (*Ad Rom.* v).

And again he writes in the same letter, composed on the way to his martyrdom, from Syria to Rome: " It is good for me to die for Jesus Christ rather than to reign over the farthermost bounds of the earth." " Let me be an imitator of the Passion of our God " (*Ad Rom.* vi).

But while this was still to be accomplished, he had but one desire left in life and that was to receive as often as he could the Holy Eucharist:

" I care no longer for corruptible food nor for the

pleasures of life. I desire only the Bread of God, the Bread of Heaven, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the race of David and Abraham. I desire the Drink of God, His Blood, which is Love incorruptible and life without end" (*Ad Rom.* vii, 3).

These indeed are glorious words — words full of fervor, full of love, full of truth, full of faith. They are a magnificent Credo of the Real Presence which no man can misunderstand or fail to apprehend.

The Christ here proclaimed to be truly, really, substantially present in the Eucharist is declared to be not only *true Man*, whose lineage can be traced to the race of David and Abraham, but also *true God*, for He is "the Son of God." What the martyr, therefore, avows that he receives in this Sacrament is the very substance and entire reality of the Saviour, Man and God, "the Flesh of Jesus Christ" and "His Blood."

It is the "Bread of God" and the "Drink of God."

What it all finally means for him is: "Love incorruptible" and "life without end." Was there ever a nobler, a more perfect confession of the full Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist than that made by this glorious martyr, the disciple of the Apostles and the inheritor of their Eucharistic Faith!

But what is more, we have here a tenderness and ardor of devotion which may best be compared with the same qualities in that equally devoted Saint of our own day, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, showing

how all the Christian ages are one in the Eucharist, where there is distinction neither of sex, nor condition in life, nor years, nor centuries.

Could we imagine a more striking difference in the accidental circumstances of life than that which existed between the veteran Bishop, who for thirty-five years had governed the Church of Antioch, the second successor after St. Peter in the spiritual charge over that great city where the name of " Christians " was first given to us, and who died amid the mad shouts of the pagan multitudes, his body ground by the teeth of wild beasts in the Flavian amphitheater, — and on the other hand the youthful Carmelite nun, who spent her short life of twenty-four years in the shelter of home and cloister, and ended her days as a Martyr Victim of Divine Love, just one decade of years less than eighteen centuries after the glorious fight of the Martyr Bishop?

But however vast the differences in their conditions of life and however long the interval of the centuries between them, their fervor of Eucharistic devotion is one and the same, as is also the effect produced upon them by the sublime Sacrament of Love.

" Love incorruptible and life without end," such was the Eucharist to the Sainted Martyr of Apostolic days. The one and only thing longed for on his way to death was to eat of " the Bread of Heaven," and to partake of the " Drink of God, His Blood." Knowing that this reception of the Eucharist meant for him a union, not figurative and symbolic, but true and real, with " Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the race

of David and Abraham," whom he could love as both human and Divine, as his Saviour and his God, and with whom alone he desired to be united eternally.

Then listen in turn how the Little Flower of our own time, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, described her First Communion:

" How sweet was the first embrace of Jesus! It was indeed an embrace of love. I felt that I was loved, and I said: ' I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee forever. . . .' That day of our meeting was more than simple recognition, it was perfect union. We were no longer two. Theresa had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the immensity of the ocean; Jesus alone remained — He was the Master, the King! . . .

" Then my joy became so intense, so deep, that it could not be restrained, tears of happiness welled up and overflowed. My companions were astonished . . . and no one understood that all the joy of Heaven had come down into one heart, and that this heart, exiled, weak and mortal as it was, could not contain it without tears " (" Autobiography " 59, 60).

Ravished with the same sweetness of that union of his soul with Christ, the veteran Bishop had exclaimed: " I care no longer for corruptible food, nor for the pleasures of life, I desire only the Bread of God." In exactly the same spirit the youthful spouse of Christ describes the day following her First Communion:

" Somehow the next day seemed sorrowful. The

pretty clothes and the presents I had received could not satisfy me. Henceforth Our Lord alone could fill my heart, and all I longed for was the blissful moment when I should receive Him again " (*Ib.* 61).

More than eighteen centuries before the pronouncements issued by Pope Pius X on the real purpose of Holy Communion, the Apostolic Father and glorious Martyr St. Ignatius has seen in it: " the source of eternal salvation," a means of preservation against death, and " a medicine which will expel all evils within us."

In the same way the Little Flower of our own modern day looked to the Eucharist for the support and help she needed. She was afraid of her own liberty, she writes, and felt herself " so weak and frail that she wished to be forever united to the Divine Strength " (*Ib.* 59).

Daily Communion was not granted her as freely as it is now granted us, but during a period of long and trying weeks, when one after another of the Sisters in her Carmel died of an epidemic, and conditions around her became heart-rending, with death on every side, the daily reception of the Eucharist was permitted her as her consolation and strength. " How sweet it was! " she exclaims, " I was unspeakably happy to be united day after day to my Beloved."

In the strength of that Bread she could indeed overcome all difficulties, and yet with her wonderful delicacy of love, she added: " I desire to receive Our Lord, not for my own satisfaction, but simply to give Him pleasure." And hence she was not disturbed

when, without her fault, she experienced that dryness, desolation and distraction attended her Communions. She merely tried to make up for this during the day. The same human quality we have noticed in the great Martyr Bishop for whom the Eucharist is a medicine in our weakness.

But this is not all. The Eucharist accomplished for St. Theresa precisely what it accomplished for St. Ignatius eighteen centuries before. He drew from it the strength which enabled him to write in eager expectation of his martyrdom: "May I have the joy of the beasts!" To be rent limb from limb by lion and hyena in the great amphitheater of Rome, while the multitude would wheel about him in a blur of frantic faces, and Heaven would be thrown open to his soul, was a thought to elate his spirit with joy unspeakable.

And so St. Theresa, too, has told us how after one of her very first Communions, in the years of her childhood, she already felt her heart "inflamed with an ardent desire for suffering." But this was to grow into a great intense longing for martyrdom as her spiritual life was constantly nourished and strengthened by the Eucharist and so brought to its full beauty and heroic development. Even the glorious Martyr of Antioch, close as he was to the time of Christ, and with the example of the Saints Peter and Paul before him, could not more eagerly desire martyrdom then this delicate girl of little more than twenty years of age.

Listen to these words and understand what the "Bread of God" and the "Drink of God," as St.

Ignatius calls the Eucharist, can accomplish in a human soul:

"Above all," wrote the Little Flower, "I thirst for the Martyr's crown. It was the desire of my earliest days, and the desire has deepened with the years spent in the Carmel's narrow cell. But this too is folly, since I do not sigh for one torment; I need them all to slake my thirst.

"Like Thee, O Adorable Spouse, I would be scourged, I would be crucified! I would be flayed like St. Bartholomew, plunged into boiling oil like St. John, *or like St. Ignatius of Antioch, ground by the teeth of wild beasts into a bread worthy of God.*

"With St. Agnes and St. Cecelia I would offer my neck to the sword of the executioner, and like Joan of Arc, I would murmur the name of Jesus at the stake.

"My heart thrills at the thought of the frightful tortures Christians are to suffer at the time of Antichrist, and I long to undergo them all. Open, O Jesus, the Book of Life, in which are written the deeds of Thy Saints: all the deeds told in that book I long to have accomplished for Thee" (*Ib.*, 182).

All this the Eucharist could effect in the days of the Apostles and in our own. It could inflame in the heart of the frail girl, brought up in an age of material comforts and spiritual coldness, the same fervor wherewith, in the midst of a pagan civilization of another day, the great Martyr Bishop could utter those eucharistic words which, as we see above, had touched her so deeply: "I am the wheat of Christ; let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may become clean bread."

Mass in Post Apostolic Age

THE TESTIMONIES OF PLINY AND ST. JUSTIN

IT is not surprising that one of our most valuable Mass references in the second century, close to the time of the Apostles, should come to us from a pagan source. It is the famous letter of Pliny the Younger, Roman Governor of the Province of Bithynia, written about the year 112 to his imperial master Trajan.

We note with special interest that the Emperor here in question was the very one under whom, some five years before, St. Ignatius had been torn by the teeth of wild beasts in the amphitheater at Rome.

Between the time of Pliny's letter and the Death of Christ upon the Cross, barely more than three quarters of a century had elapsed. The memory of the Apostles was still fresh in the youthful Church. But already the Faith had passed through numerous persecutions. Leadership in its ranks was a candidacy, if not a practical assurance, of martyrdom. Yet the fact was that in spite of all opposition, the Church was fast covering the entire earth. "Verily," St. Paul

could write, at an even much earlier date, in recounting the work of his fellow missionaries, " their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world " (Rom. x, 18).

Another quarter of a century and even whole provinces would become largely Christian. In all truth the Church could be called " catholic," that is universal. Among those Christian provinces Bithynia would be numbered, from which Pliny was now writing, towards the year 112, informing the Emperor in regard to the Christian assemblies there, at which without any doubt, the Eucharist was also offered.

These gatherings, indeed, had already been under suspicion from the earliest days of the Church. It was into such assemblies, and possibly even while Eucharistic Services were being held there, that Saul himself — later to be Paul the Apostle — must have entered with authority from the High Priest to drag forth men and women, and to bring them bound to Jerusalem. Many a persecutor of the Christians, as we know, received the grace to become an ardent convert.

In his province of Bithynia, which must then have counted numerous Christians, Pliny had taken informations regarding their assemblies. The knowledge he possessed of them was largely drawn from persons who had apostatized in order to escape the tortures inflicted on the martyrs of the Faith.

Then, as at all times, there were worldly and unworthy members, who long before may have tampered with the grace of God. These informers, Pliny

states, had all worshipped the image of the Emperor and the statues of the gods, and they had cursed Christ. But from their information nothing could be gathered that would confirm the suspicions of the Emperor. The Roman Governor thus sets down their testimony:

" They affirm the whole of their [the Christians'] guilt or error was that they were accustomed to meet on a certain stated day before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ alternately among themselves, as to some god, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purpose of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor withhold a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up. After this it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to eat an ordinary and harmless food."

Not satisfied with merely receiving the reports of his officials, Pliny had, under his own personal direction, put to the torture two Christian women, as he further tells the Emperor, that so he might extort from them a full confession regarding the Christian assemblies. But from these heroic martyrs, who had performed special functions in that early Church, *quae ministrae dicebantur,* he could learn nothing further. Amid their torments they evidently had continued to make a strong and fearless profession of their Faith. This drew from Pliny the remark that he could find nothing except a " base and extravagant superstition."

Now the certain day on which these Christians always met was of course Sunday, to which fact we

have abundant references in the earliest Christian writings near enough to this date. Two meetings took place on this day according to the practice of these Bithynian Christians of about the year 112.

It was at the latter of these meetings, apparently the one held towards evening, that the Eucharist was celebrated. Pliny here makes special reference to the eating of some " harmless food," which naturally appeared " ordinary " enough to him, since he could see in the Eucharist only the external species of bread and wine, and not the Divine Substance hidden under them.

The statement of the two Christian women, who may have triumphantly avowed amid their tortures that it was the true Body and Blood of the Incarnate God which they received in Holy Communion, would then, consistently enough, have been summed up in his perverted pagan judgment as " base and extravagant superstition " — *superstitionem pravam et immodicam.* That is exactly what the Holy Mass would have meant to him, as indeed it was judged in no more moderate terms in later centuries by those who had lost the true Faith of the first Christians, as handed down by the Apostles.

What Pliny apparently looked for was a verification of the current pagan stories, which recounted how the Christians met to slay a child in order that they might feed upon its flesh and drink its blood. Ancient apologists of the Faith frequently refer to such charges of a kind of Thyestean banquet which pagans believed the Christians practised at their secret and — as it was

thought — infamous gatherings. Under these abhorrent slanders from which our brethren in the Faith suffered some eighteen hundred years ago, we can nevertheless clearly enough trace the blind allusion to the Real Presence in the Eucharist, to Mass and Communion.

It is in full conformity with Pliny's knowledge of what ordinarily happened in the secret pagan gatherings that he further refers to a solemn oath taken by the Christians in their assemblies. Judging from the substance of this imagined oath it has reference to nothing else than the exhortations constantly given the Christians to refrain from everything that was evil. It would thus be nothing more than a distorted pagan allusion to what we have called the Christianized synagogue service, with its singing, prayers, reading, and sermon, corresponding to our prologue to the Mass.

It appears from Pliny's description that the two Sunday services of the Bithynian Christians represented respectively the Christianized synagogue service and the Eucharist, held separately. The former took place in the morning, while the latter was celebrated in the evening. Such a separation might normally have been customary there, but it might just as well have been due solely to the fear of incurring still greater suspicion by services that would seem too protracted under the circumstances, and thus might bring down upon them even more relentless persecutions.

Naturally, the eucharistic testimony we can gather

from Pliny is inevitably vague, as coming from a pagan little interested in Christian rites. On the other hand we possess in the First Apology of St. Justin, the Martyr, which was written not so many years later, the most explicit Mass liturgy that can be found in any of the documents dating back to the first three Christian centuries. This great Father of the early Church and blood-witness to the Faith does not belong, like St. Clement and St. Ignatius, to the Apostolic Age, yet he directly touches upon it. The exact date of his birth we do not know, but it was close enough to the first century, and he lived in the half century that followed the death of St. John the Apostle. He can, therefore, be regarded as almost a direct heir of the traditions of the Apostles.

St. Justin was a convert from paganism and received the Faith, at the latest, some time around the year 130. After valiantly defending the Christian religion, he finally suffered martyrdom at Rome about the year 167.

As a noted philosopher St. Justin was in his day the outstanding apologist of the early Church, having addressed two defenses of the Faith — " Apologies " they are called — to two different Roman Emperors. He also took up the controversy with the Jews and so wrote his famous " Dialogue with Trypho." The latter was at a subsequent period described as the most prominent Jew of St. Justin's time. Although Justin wrote many more works, these are the only ones which remain to us. In fact the First Apology alone shall here concern us.

It was perhaps some forty years after the events recorded in Pliny's letter to Trajan, that Justin addressed his First Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and at the same time also to the Emperor's adopted son and to the Roman Senate. His purpose was to dispel those very same suspicions which Pliny and Trajan had entertained, and which still continued alive in the minds of people and rulers.

As a philosopher, versed in all the subtleties of Greek thought, Justin was the most likely Christian apologist to obtain a hearing for the Faith and possibly avert further persecution of the Christians. The latter purpose was his immediate aim, while ultimately he desired also to bring about the conversion of well-meaning pagans.

The best way to effect his object, Justin believed, was to make a full statement of the facts and truths. Among other things, therefore, he describes rather minutely, in his Apology, what took place in the Christian assemblies of his time at Rome. That precisely was what Pliny had sought to learn for his imperial master forty years before, by questioning the apostates and examining faithful Christian women *per tormenta.*

From the freedom with which St. Justin speaks of the details of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Holy Communion it is argued that the *disciplina arcani*, the " Discipline of the Secret," did not yet exist at that time. Others draw the conclusion that during the momentary lull in the persecutions the discipline was somewhat relaxed, or that Justin believed the good

to be attained by a full publicity might be sufficient reason for his freedom of speech.

In the part of his Apology, therefore, that deals with the Holy Sacrifice St. Justin explains its meaning and institution, besides giving us two distinct accounts of the Mass liturgy. One of these, curiously enough, lends color to the explanation I have just suggested regarding the possibility of entirely separate services having been held by the Bithynian Christians for what was later to be known as the Mass of the Catechumens, and the Mass of the Faithful.

St. Justin, namely, speaks in the first place of what has been called the Baptismal Mass. After explaining the Sacrament of Baptism he comes to the Eucharist, and there leaves us to draw the conclusion that whenever the former rite was administered, the Mass of the Catechumens, corresponding to the introductory part of our Mass, was entirely omitted. The Eucharistic Services then began with the formal introduction of the newly baptized Christian into the congregation. This act was followed immediately by the Prayer of the Faithful and the Kiss of Peace. After that the Mass proper began, which the newly baptized member of the Flock heard on this occasion for the first time, since previously he could not be admitted to the Mystery of Faith. Here, too, he received his First Communion. Justin says:

"After we have thus cleansed him who believes and he is united to us we lead him in to those who are called the brethren [i.e. the Faithful, the community of the Baptized] where they are come together to say

common prayers with eager devotion: for ourselves, for him who has received the light [i.e. the newly baptized], and for all others everywhere, that after having learned to know the truth, we may be found in deed good workers and faithful keepers of the Commandments, and thus come unto eternal salvation."

This obviously is the Prayer of the Faithful as described previously in the Mass of St. Peter. With that Justin continues:

" When we have completed the prayers, we greet each other with a kiss,

" Then bread and a cup of wine are brought, etc. (lxv, 1–3).

The Mass proper which now follows is the same as the Mass proper which he next describes for us in the ordinary Sunday Eucharistic Services of these Roman Christians. He himself definitely states that the two are the same, referring back to the first Mass with the words, " as I have mentioned " (lxvii, 5).

In the typical Sunday Mass, therefore, the introductory part is given which had been omitted by him in the Baptismal Mass, save for what I have already quoted. From that point on, the two Mass descriptions cover entirely the same subject, and can be blended into one single account of the Mass in the year of Our Lord 150.

Taking the Sunday Mass, then, as our basis, we shall at once insert into the description of this whatever additional matter can be gathered from St. Justin's first account of the Mass proper, thus offering

SYMBOLS OF BAPTISM AND EUCHARIST.

Chapel of Sacraments. Catacomb of Callixtus.

Above: The Fisherman, A Baptism, The Paralytic. See pp. 285–287.

Below: Moses Striking the Rock, The Fisherman, The Seven Disciples. See pp. 296–299, also 284.

one continuous narrative, which will be entirely St. Justin's own description.

Naturally we are not to look here for a complete liturgical Mass manual of the second century, but merely for the exposition of such points as it was thought might satisfy and instruct the pagan mind, or at least help to eradicate some of its deep-rooted suspicions regarding the eucharistic gatherings of the Christians.

The liturgy as thus given is distinctly that of Apostolic times. It was directly derived from the Apostles, conforms perfectly with practically all we know of the rite of the Holy Mass as offered by them, both in regard to its introductory part and the Sacrifice proper, and was handed down by the men who themselves had been the disciples of the Apostles. Many, in fact, were then still alive who had attended the Eucharistic Services over which St. John himself had presided, the favorite Apostle of the Lord, who broke for Mary the Bread of Life and gave into her hands once more the selfsame Body of her Divine Son that was conceived within her womb and offered by her to the Father beneath the Cross on Calvary, in union with the great Oblation of Christ Himself.

Two things, I may however mention at once, had by this time been omitted in the Eucharistic Services at Rome, as described by St. Justin.

The first of these was the *Agape*. This, we understand, was never an integral part of the Mass as said by the Apostles. It could readily enough be omitted, as is obvious from the remarks made by St. Paul,

and in fact disappeared, as a liturgical feature, after the first century.

The second omission we note is that of tongues and prophecy. But here again there is question of something in no way inseparably connected with the Holy Sacrifice, or with the eucharistic liturgy in general. The fact of these practices did not so much depend upon human regulations, as upon the special effusion of the Holy Spirit, without which they were impossible.

In the time of the "Didache," as we noted, the speaking in strange tongues had already ceased, so far at least as we may judge from that one document, whose evidence, of course, is not conclusive or universal. But the gift of prophecy was then still to be found among the Faithful, who were free to make their utterances as prompted by the Spirit of God. In the liturgy, however, given us by St. Justin, this gift also appears to have ceased. Both these unusual manifestations were granted only for a limited period during the very early years of the Church and served their particular purpose in the Divine plan. Extraordinary means were needed that the newly founded Christianity might be strengthened, firmly established and rapidly spread.

With these preliminary observations made we can now proceed directly to the description of the Mass as said at Rome in the days of St. Justin.

MASS AT ROME ABOUT THE YEAR 150

"ON the day named after the Sun," says St. Justin the Martyr in his First Apology, writing about the year of Our Lord 150, "all who live in the towns and in the country assemble in one place" (lxvii, 3).

It is the regular Sunday Mass to which he refers for which all the Faithful assembled, then as now. With this fact we are already sufficiently familiar from the "Didache" and the Epistles of St. Paul, as well as from the Acts of the Apostles. For the choice of this particular day two reasons are assigned by St. Justin.

"We all come together on the day of the Sun because that is the first day, on which God, transforming darkness and matter, made the world." Such is the first reason given, but the second, which he immediately joins to this, presents us with the real historic ground for the change from Sabbath to Sunday: "And Jesus Christ, Our Saviour, on the same day rose from the dead." To this he then adds a brief historic account for the benefit of his pagan readers:

"For they crucified Him on the eve of the day of

Kronos [i.e. on the day before Saturday, named for Saturn whom the Greeks called Kronos]. On the day after that of Kronos, which is the day of the Sun, He appeared to the Apostles and disciples, teaching them the things which I here offer for your consideration" (lxvii, 7).

The last words of St. Justin have reference to what St. Luke says in the Acts of the Apostles: "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His Passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the Kingdom of God" (1, 3). There is every reason for believing that many things regarding the Eucharist were then mentioned by Christ to His Apostles. Such specifically, as we shall more fully discuss later, was the tradition in regard to the most important portion of the liturgy of the Mass in the early Church.

"The memoirs of the Apostles, [i.e. the Gospels, as he elsewhere explains] or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits. Then, when the lector has ended, he who presides [i.e. the Bishop acting as celebrant of the Mass] warns and exhorts us in a speech that dwells on the admirable truths brought to mind [in the reading]. Then we all stand and send up our prayers."

We thus have here a brief account of the introductory part of the Mass, in which we plainly recognize at once the Christianized synagogue service:

Three actions are here specified: reading of the sections from the New and Old Testament, "as long as time permits," the Prophecies being still included;

sermon by the Bishop who offers up the Holy Sacrifice; and finally prayers, in which all join, the entire congregation standing up. It was needless to mention that these prayers were said with arms extended and uplifted hands, since that was a customary way of praying even with the pagans. Although no dismissal of the unbaptized is mentioned here, yet these prayers clearly belong to the second part of the Eucharistic Service.

Nothing is remarked of the psalms sung between the lessons. This omission does not, however, imply the absence of that feature of the ordinary Eucharistic Service. It must be remembered that St. Justin merely mentions what is necessary to disabuse the Emperor of the false conception that criminal and inhumanly abhorrent rites were practised at these eucharistic gatherings.

The nature of the prayers mentioned in the last place is sufficiently indicated to the Emperor in the passage already quoted by me in the preceding chapter. They are the same Prayers of the Faithful mentioned there in connection with the Baptismal Mass, which from this part on is entirely identical with the ordinary Sunday Mass. " When we have concluded the prayers," St. Justin continues, " we salute each other with a kiss " (lxv, 2).

Doubtless in the Apostolic days the Kiss of Peace, as I have previously pointed out, had occupied precisely the same liturgical position, but was followed immediately by the *Agape*, whenever this actually took place.

In the Roman Mass of the year 150 everything continued in the same order already described in the Mass of St. Peter, omitting the *Agape*. From the Kiss of Peace St. Justin proceeds to his account of the Mass proper, the Mass at which the baptized alone could be present. The entire central action of the Mass he describes as " making the Eucharist," always understanding that the word Eucharist as used by him and by us in connection with the Mass means " Thanksgiving." The Consecrated species, he definitely calls, as we shall see, by the name of " Eucharist." We are therefore entirely free to employ this word in connection with his text, since it has by this time sufficiently acquired its technical meaning.

I shall now proceed to the first of the two descriptions of the Mass proper given in St. Justin's First Apology. For clearness sake I shall at once insert, within brackets, all the necessary explanations. He writes:

" Then bread and a cup of wine are brought to the one presiding among the brethren [i.e. the Bishop who celebrates the Mass]. He, taking them, sends up praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and makes the Eucharist *at length* [i.e. including the Preface, Consecration, etc.], because we are granted these favors by Him [i.e. the Father]. When he has ended the prayers and Eucharist all the people present say ' Amen.' But the word ' Amen ' in the Hebrew language means ' So be it.'

" And after the one presiding has completed the

Eucharist, and all the people have made exclamation [i.e. have said out aloud "Amen"], those who are called by us deacons give to each one present participation in the "Eucharisted" [i.e. Consecrated] Bread and Wine and water [i.e. just as now, so then the wine had been mingled with water before the Consecration], and carry them to those who are absent" (lxv, 3–5).

Again it must be borne in mind that not more is mentioned here than was required to banish the suspicions of the pagan reader. Nevertheless all the essentials and the substantial outline of the Mass proper, as said then and said today, are included here. That this is really the case will become incontrovertibly clear when shortly we shall come to his explanation of the nature of the Eucharist and of its institution.

The second description of the Mass of the Faithful, covering exactly the same rite, is more brief. It reads:

"When we have finished the prayer bread is brought up, and wine and water. Then the one presiding [i.e. the Bishop celebrant] sends up prayers and likewise Thanksgivings as far as he has power [i.e. does all implied above in "making the Eucharist" which is therewith completed], and all the people cry out, saying 'Amen.' Then each one receives a share in the distribution of the Eucharist, and it is to be taken to the absent by the deacons" (lxvii, 5).

If we reflect for a moment we shall realize that the language of St. Justin in speaking of the Eucharist, strange though it may appear at first sight, is really

the same as that which is used by Catholics today. We simply must never lose sight of the fact that our word "Eucharist," is derived from the Greek, in which language St. Justin wrote, and there means nothing else than "Thanksgiving."

Yet a certain distinction is to be noted between the second century and our own in the exact use of this word "Eucharist" or "Thanksgiving." It is now employed in a very general way to cover everything concerning the Sacrifice and the Sacrament of the altar, whereas then it was rather restricted to the Mass proper, or even more strictly to the portion from the beginning of our Preface to the end of our Canon, the Eastern Anaphora, all of which centers in the Consecration, although St. Justin was also inclined to use the word as we do now. Immediately before entering upon his explanation of the nature of the Blessed Sacrament St. Justin thus informs the Emperor:

"And this Food *is called by us a Eucharist,* of which no one else may have a share except he who believes that our teaching is true, and who has been cleansed in the laver for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration [i.e. in the Sacrament of Baptism], and who lives as Christ enjoined" (lxvi, 1).

The conditions here placed by St. Justin for the reception of the Eucharist are precisely the same that are laid down in the Church today: Baptism and the state of grace. The latter of these, every Christian possesses who "lives as Christ enjoined." It suffices that we are not conscious of any mortal sin. To Baptism and the state of grace is to be added a third

and obvious condition, the right intention, namely, a proper motive in receiving. Mention of this was not called for on the part of St. Justin. It can normally be presumed to exist.

But there was a further significance to the words just quoted from our Saint. They implied namely that no one who lived a scandalous life could be present at the Mass of the Faithful, since no one attended the Mass proper who did not communicate at it. Hence, those whose lives were not in conformity with the teaching of Christ could be forbidden admission to the Holy Sacrifice.

In later years we clearly find the Mass of the Faithful closed not merely to the Catechumens, but also to the class known as " Penitents," who had first to make full satisfactory atonement before they would again be admitted to be present with the brethren at the Divine Mysteries. These Penitents were dismissed with the Catechumens after the sermon was ended and before the Offertory began. I have ventured to make a remote application of this practice as already in use in the Mass said by St. Peter.

We now finally come to St. Justin's clear and full statement of his faith in the Real Presence. It is equally profound and beautiful, and can offer no fundamental difficulties. Here is therefore what the future martyr for Christ has to say regarding the nature of the Mystery of Faith in his appeal to Antoninus Pius, to the Emperor's son and the Roman Senate:

" For we do not receive these things [i.e. the things

which the Christians received in Holy Communion] as common bread or common drink. But even as Jesus Christ our Saviour, after being made flesh by a word of God [i.e. by the word of Divine power which caused the Incarnation] had Flesh and Blood for our salvation, so we have learned that the food, made a Eucharist by a word of prayer which comes from Him [i.e. by the word of Consecration as divinely instituted by Christ] *is, by a change, the Flesh and Blood of the Incarnate Jesus*, wherewith our own flesh and blood are nourished " (lxvi, 2).

We have, therefore, at this early period, the perfect and complete comparison instituted between the Incarnation and the Eucharist. Let us consider this for a moment in language that will not sound too technical, though strictly theological.

The real object of the Incarnation, St. Justin tells us, is the Flesh and Blood of Christ, and this he affirms is also the real object of the Eucharist.

Again, the efficient cause by which the Incarnation took place is " a word of God," and in the same manner he explains that through " a word of God," the Eucharist also is brought about. He uses no article and hence we reasonably conclude that he does not refer to *the* Word of God, as producing these effects in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist, but to *a* word: the almighty word, namely, at which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity " was made flesh " in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and the Divine word of Consecration at which the bread and wine in the hands of the priest become the Flesh and Blood of

EUCHARISTIC TRILOGY.

Chapel of Sacraments. Catacomb of Callixtus

Above: The Consecration, Abraham's Sacrifice (the Eucharist as a Sacrifice).
Below: The Eucharistic Banquet (the Eucharist as a Sacrament).

For interpretation of entire trilogy see pp. 287–293.

the same Christ whom Mary conceived of the Holy Ghost.

In his own language, what before was bread and wine is such no longer, but instead, " made a Eucharist by a word of prayer," they now are, " by a change, the Flesh and Blood of the Incarnate Jesus."

Could any language more fully convey the doctrine of the Real Presence which in later years the Church was to sum up in the theologically accurate expression, " transubstantiation "? No one can deny, Harnack confessed on coming to this passage in his " Dogmengeschichte," that Justin " proclaims a marvelous identity " between " the consecrated bread and the body which the Logos [the Word of God] has assumed."

To make all this still more clear St. Justin gives the Emperor the following account of the Institution of the Eucharist by Christ:

" For the Apostles, in the memoirs made by them which are called Gospels, have handed down to us that they were instructed thus: Jesus, having taken bread and having given thanks, said: *Do this in memory of Me; This is My Body.* And in the same way, having taken the cup and having given thanks He said: *This is My Blood.* And He gave to them only " (lxvi, 3).

There, in briefest words, we have in substance the Institution of the Eucharist: the command to repeat what Christ had done, the real change of the bread into His true Body, " This is My Body," and of the wine into His true Blood, " This is My Blood," and

finally the Communion which can be given to the Faithful only. Once we have grasped the difference of technical expression and the difference in minor details, we are as perfectly at home in the Mass of the Romans in the year 150, as in the Mass of the Apostles before them, or in the Masses said in any Catholic Church today the whole world over. There has been no change in substance or in outline through the centuries.

The Mass liturgy of St. Justin will be found also to correspond perfectly with that set down in the Apostolic Constitutions more than two centuries later, and with the essence as well as the general plan of every subsequent rite down to our own day.

So every page of these earliest Christian writers strengthens our Faith. We know that we are one with the Apostles, one with the Fathers of the Church, one with the legions of Martyrs and Confessors, who have all partaken with us of the selfsame Divine Banquet, who have been nourished, in the words of St. Justin, on " the Flesh and Blood of the Incarnate Jesus."

But the Saint and Martyr, whose words we have been studying, has still one more fact to tell us before closing his account of the liturgy of the Mass. It has to do with the collection of alms for the poor and the needy which was made in connection with the Holy Sacrifice, although we are not informed at what precise point of the liturgy it was introduced. He thus presents this interesting detail:

" But the wealthy people who wish to do so give what they please, each one as he likes. What has been thus collected is handed over to the one who presides [i.e. the Bishop], who supports orphans, and widows, and those who are in straits through sickness or any other cause, and prisoners, and strangers in their travel. In general he is the protector of all who are in want " (lxvii, 6).

So through the ages the Church has continued her corporal works of mercy, which are the fruit of that charity which itself is nourished and enriched by the Eucharist.

Like St. Ignatius, St. Justin, too, was strengthened by the Body and Blood of the Saviour to undergo triumphantly the ordeal of martyrdom, offering up his own body to be scourged and his blood to be poured out for Christ. From the Divine Sacrifice he drew the courage to make with fortitude and heroism the sacrifice of his life. With six other Christians he was condemned to death by the pagan Prefect Rusticus. We still possess the authentic account of his martyrdom. It reads:

" The Prefect Rusticus says: ' Approach and sacrifice, all of you, to the gods! '

" Justin says: ' No one in his right mind gives up piety for impiety.'

" The Prefect Rusticus says: ' If you do not obey you will be tortured without mercy.'

" Justin replies: ' *That is our desire, to be tortured for Our Lord Jesus Christ, and so to be saved;* for that will give us salvation, and firm confidence as to

the more terrible universal tribunal of Our Lord and Saviour.'

" And all the martyrs said: ' Do as you wish; for we are Christians and do not sacrifice to idols ' " (Acts SS., April 11, 104–119).

When we read such accounts let us well understand that all the beauty, all the heroism, all the sublime virtue and apostolic fervor of the early Church flowered out of the Eucharist. The effects it produced then, It can and does produce today in those who receive It with the same purity and earnest, single-hearted devotion. It can make saints of us today, and should occasion offer, martyrs.

ST. IRENAEUS AND THE REAL PRESENCE

BESIDES the patristic authors already quoted, we have various other writers of the Apostolic Age, or closely connected with it, who offer their testimony on the Eucharist. This we invariably find to be in full conformity with all that has here been recorded. Yet such eucharistic references are mostly incidental, brief and often indirect. But there is one great Father of the Church, the contemporary of St. Justin, although born somewhat later than he, whose writings offer a rich store of eucharistic comment, mostly of a doctrinal or historic nature. This is St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons.

We have no definite information regarding the precise time of his birth. The earliest probable date mentioned is the year 115, and it has even been placed some two decades later. What, however, alone concerns us here is the assurance that his testimony comes in a direct line from the Apostles.

He himself tells us that he had learned his doctrine from the lips of Polycarp, who in turn had immediately received it from the Apostle St. John and from others "who had seen the Lord." We are thus

still in touch with the Disciples who walked with Jesus in Galilee.

The famous letter written by Irenaeus to a certain Florinus, whom he admonished for his errors, serves as an excellent illustration of how faithfully the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles was preserved in oral tradition by the men of that period. The Saint tells Florinus:

" When I was a boy I saw thee in Asia with Polycarp. . . .

" I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed . . . and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, and concerning His miracles and teachings, having received them from eye-witnesses of the Word of Life. Polycarp related all things in harmony with the Scriptures.

" These things were told me by the mercy of God, and I listened to them attentively, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart."

The language and technical expression of St. Irenaeus conform entirely with those of St. Justin. His emphasis on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is as plain and unmistakable as that of the illustrious martyr. He too uses the word " Eucharist " and describes the portion of the Mass centering in the Consecration as " Making a Eucharist."

The words of Institution or Consecration, too, are definitely quoted in his writings. But what is more, they are for him, as for St. Justin, " a word of God," by which is effected the complete substantial trans-

formation of the bread into the Body of Christ and of the wine mixed with water into the Blood of Christ.

In fact, even the same stress is laid by Irenaeus as by Justin on that mingling of the wine and water, before the Consecration, which was evidently included in the liturgy of the Apostles and still remains a striking ceremony in the Mass of today. Irenaeus in fact uses for the chalice that is to be consecrated the quaint and poetic phrase of " the mingled cup."

The transubstantiation defined by the Council of Trent could not be more adequately expressed than in the words of St. Irenaeus, where he describes the Divine action that takes place at the Consecration in the Mystery of Faith: " *When the mingled cup and the made bread perceive the word of God, and become the Eucharist of the Blood and the Body of Christ* " (*Contra Haer.*, V, ii, 3).

There is a beauty and solemnity in those few words which it would be difficult to surpass.

My quotations in this chapter, it may at once be stated, shall all be drawn from his great work which is now ordinarily known under the title given to its Latin translation: " Contra Haereses " or " Adversus Haereses," from the fifth and last book of which the above lines were taken. We realize, in passing over its pages, how keenly from her very beginning the Church was engaged in the struggle with heresy and how devotedly she was ever seeking to save her Faithful from its snares. So it was in the days of the Apostles; so we find it in the second century when that work was written; so it is today.

The Gnostic Docetae, in the time of St. Irenaeus, denied that Christ possessed a real body, and yet they believed in the Eucharist and celebrated the liturgy precisely as the true Christians did. St. Irenaeus strives to make them see the palpable inconsistency between their practice and their doctrine, since if Christ had only a phantasmal body, then neither could there be a Eucharist. The very essence of the Eucharist, as he shows them, consists in the fact that in it we have present the real, true, and substantial Flesh and Blood of the God-Man.

Never, in fact, was that Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist set forth with a more plain and bold realism than by Irenaeus, when in answer to the heretical denial of the Real Body of Christ by the Docetae, he replied:

"Then neither did the Lord redeem us by His Blood, nor is the Chalice of the Eucharist the communication of His Blood, nor the Bread which we break the communication of His Body. For blood supposes veins, flesh and all that constitutes the human substance, by which the Word of God truly became man" (V, ii, 2).

There is nothing figurative, nothing symbolic, nothing phantasmal in the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist as here so graphically and minutely described, with veins and flesh and all that belongs to a complete human nature.

But what these heretics further denied was both the possibility of bodily incorruption, and also the future resurrection of our own bodies for the same

reason. It is not necessary to trace the argument of the Saint on this subject, but there follows in this connection a most remarkable eucharistic passage. He writes:

"As the wood of the vine, placed in the earth, fructifies; and as the grain of wheat, sinking into the soil, is there decomposed and rises multifold by the Spirit of God who containeth all things; and as thereafter these [the grapes and wheat] are by Wisdom brought into the use of man [i.e. made into bread and wine], and perceiving the word of God, *become the Eucharist, which is the Body and Blood of Christ:* — so also our bodies, nourished by this [Divine Food], and laid away in the earth, and there dissolved, shall rise again in their time in the resurrection that is given them by the Word of God in the glory of God the Father, who clothes this mortal with immortality and indues this corruptible with incorruption" (V, ii, 3).

It was of course Christ Himself who united the thought of immortality and incorruption with the Eucharist, when He solemnly promised: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi, 55). Therefore again St. Irenaeus asks regarding the heretics: "How do they come to say that the flesh which is nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ shall pass into corruption and not receive life?"

Needless to say, St. Irenaeus acknowledges the corruption of the body in the grave, but he looks forward to the resurrection in glory from the dead. He thus continues:

" For the bread which is of the earth, receiving the invocation of God [i.e. the consecrating words spoken over it] is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly, so our bodies, receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible since they possess the hope of resurrection " (IV, xviii, 5).

We here meet with that very interesting allusion to the " two things," one " earthly " and the other " heavenly," of which the Eucharist is said to consist. Various explanations have been given of these two expressions. Luther's statement, that one refers to the bread and the other to the Body of Christ in the Eucharist can obviously not be accepted, since Irenaeus makes it plain beyond all doubt that, after the consecrating words, the bread and wine no longer exist in substance, but have " become the Eucharist, which is the Body and Blood of Christ " (V, ii, 3). Another explanation must therefore be found.

Two perfectly licit interpretations are offered, either of which will accord with the eucharistic doctrine of Transubstantiation which St. Irenaeus so strongly insists upon. The first is that held by Blessed Robert Bellarmine and other eminent authorities, which sees in the earthly element a reference to the outward species or appearance of bread, and in the heavenly the Body of Christ as united with the Divinity, which now is inseparable from it.

The second interpretation is that given by Döllinger and others, who believe that under the earthly element is to be understood the Body of Christ in as

far as this is truly human as our own bodies are, while the celestial element represents the Divine Word united with this Body.

In vain have efforts been made to misinterpret the plain teaching of Transubstantiation by St. Irenaeus. Like St. Justin he tells us in unmistakable words that what remains after the Consecration, is "no longer common bread," but something entirely different, the Body of Christ.

Irenaeus, like Justin, gives us also his own account of the Institution of the Eucharist, and definitely applies the Prophecy of Malachias, which he quotes in its entirety (IV, xvii, 5). The Jews, he adds, no longer offer sacrifice, but as for the heretics, "how can they have assurance that the bread over which Thanksgiving has been made [i.e. over which the Eucharistic Prayer, including the words of Consecration, have been spoken] is the Body of their Lord and the chalice His Blood, when they do not recognize Him as the Son of the Creator of the world" (IV, xviii, 4).

Besides his doctrinal discussions on the Eucharist, St. Irenaeus has also left us many scattered allusions to the liturgy of the Mass. Thus he refers to the hymns that are sung (II, ix, 1), to the lessons that are read (IV, xxxiii, 8), to the sermons preached (IV, xxiv, 2), to the offering of bread and wine (IV, xvii, 5), to the Offertory itself (IV, xviii, 1–6), and gives the words of Consecration (IV, xvii, 5). We meet, too, with our familiar formula, "for ages of ages," and listen to the equally familiar answer of

the congregation to the prayers of the celebrant: " Amen."

Finally reference should here be made to a particular impostor who gained sufficient notoriety to be personally attacked by Irenaeus. We have in this instance an interesting illustration how even the heretics of that day still held not merely the Real Presence, but obviously also the substantial Eucharistic change which this implies.

The person in question is a man named Mark, whom Irenaeus exposes in his first book against the heretics.

" Most skilled in magical imposture," as the Saint describes him, Mark sought to outdo the Bishops in their celebration of the Eucharist, by pretending to make the conversion of the wine into the Blood of Christ visible. For this purpose he took a chalice filled with white wine, which had been duly mingled with water according to the Christian liturgy, and then by cunning devices caused the wine to turn purple or red, as he pronounced over it, at great length, " the word of the invocation " (I, xiii, 1, 2,).

Although a detestable mountebank, the heresiarch thus unintentionally bore witness to the Christian faith in the transubstantiation of the wine into the Blood of Christ, sacrilegiously though he abused this great Mystery of Faith.

But he went even further and had women perform a supposed act of Consecration before him.

" Again, giving mixed chalices to women," says St. Irenaeus, " he bade them make the Eucharist before

him." When this travesty had been performed, he took out a much larger chalice than those used by these duped creatures, and pouring into it the wine out of their cup, apparently caused the larger cup to overflow with the contents of the smaller (*Ib.*).

It is hardly necessary to say that Mark was no less lewd than sacrilegious, making religion a cloak for his lust. Yet men and women attended his services and, like the pagan bacchantes, became completely frantic at these exhibitions. Thus even the holiest things are by God's permission open to abuse. "The precursor of Antichrist," Irenaeus called this charlatan, who actually obtained a considerable following.

Once more, therefore, we have in this early Father of the Church, a witness to the Unchanging Eucharistic Faith handed down by the Apostles, and especially to the great truths of the Real Presence and the Transubstantiation.

Communion in the Early Church

ST. CYPRIAN AND UNWORTHY COMMUNICANTS

ST. CYPRIAN, Bishop of Carthage, whose martyrdom took place in the year 258, has left us a book known as "Liber de Lapsis." The volume deals with those who under pressure of persecution had fallen from the Faith. In an indirect way it further illustrates much that has already been said and strikingly shows us the reverence of the early Christians for the Real Presence.

Since only a single century separates him from the last of the Apostles, it may be presumed that the Apostolic traditions were then still strongly and vividly before the minds of men.

Like Irenaeus, Cyprian speaks of the Eucharist as "The Body of the Lord," and he finds fault with those who admit the lapsed Christians to the Sacred Mysteries and the reception of Holy Communion even before any canonical penance has been performed. In this connection he quotes St. Paul (I Cor. xi, 27).

"They presume against the law of the Gospel," he says, "to offer for them and to give to them the

Eucharist. That is to profane the Holy Body of the Lord, when it is written: 'Whosoever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord'" (*Ep.* x).

Directly before the Decian persecution, as it may be well to explain here, the Church had enjoyed a considerable period of prosperity, during which time worldliness and serious abuses crept in. When, therefore, in the year 250, the violence of a new persecution suddenly broke out, many were not prepared to resist it. Yet numerous, too, were the heroes of the Faith. Bishops were ordered to be instantly put to death, and others to be tortured until they would recant. Pope Fabian was one of the first to suffer martyrdom.

As an example of heroic endurance among the laity I may instance Numidicus, who had encouraged many of the martyrs. His wife was burned alive before his eyes. He himself was first half burned, then stoned, and finally left lying for dead, but his daughter resuscitated him and Cyprian consecrated him a priest.

At Carthage, however, great numbers apostatized. Some sacrificed to the idols; others bought certificates (*libelli*) which falsely stated they had sacrificed. These latter persons were know as *libellatici.*

Of the fallen some never repented, others passed over to the heretics, while those, too, were not wanting who of their own free will, moved by the grace of God, returned to the tribunals and declared their Faith, to be then tortured anew and so at last to win

their crown. The greater number, however, simply sought to be readmitted to the Eucharist. Of these some devoutly entered on the performance of the canonical penances enjoined them, during which period they could neither hear Mass nor receive Communion. But others, in defiance of ecclesiastical discipline, were illicitly admitted to the Eucharist, or else, if denied, violently claimed their right to it. Of the latter our Saint writes:

"Spurning and despising all these rules, before they have appeased the offended majesty of God, they come indignant and threatening, doing violence to His Body and Blood, and in a manner offend more by their hands and mouth than when they denied Him" (*De Lapsis*, 16).

The graphic allusion at the end to their offending "by their hands and mouth" has reference to the custom, that was still to remain in force for a considerable time, of giving the Eucharist into the hands of the recipients, who then communicated themselves with it.

The Communion unworthily received by the "lapsed" St. Cyprian regards as a worse offense, "in a manner," than their denial of the Lord before the judge who examined them. In the latter instance they may simply have purchased the certificate, which virtually stated that they were not Christians. Horrible as such a public disavowal of their Faith was, they were in the second case guilty of actually "profaning the Holy Body of the Lord."

But viewing these events from a doctrinal point of

view, it is clear what a striking confirmation we have here of the strong belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and hence of the supreme reverence due to it.

Still more plain, if possible, than what has already been quoted, are the words with which St. Cyprian scourges those who take umbrage at the priests for refusing them the Sacrament under such circumstances.

"What good opinion can you have of him?" writes the Saint, "what fear, what faith can you suppose him to have, whom fear could not correct, whom persecution has not reformed? The high and lofty neck, though fallen, is not bent. The proud and swelling mind, though conquered is not broken. Wounded, fallen, he looks with curiosity at the erect and unblemished. Sacrilegiously he is enraged against the priest, because he does not at once receive the Body of the Lord in his unclean hands, or with polluted mouth drink the Blood of the Lord" (*De Lapsis*, 22).

But the reverence due to the true Body and Blood of Christ, the Real Presence in the Eucharist, is even more strongly brought home in an incident which St. Cyprian recounts as having been witnessed by himself. It is doubly interesting because it illustrates the manner in which Holy Communion was then given with the Precious Blood to infants.

"Listen to an event," the Saint begins, "that happened in my presence and under my observation." He then tells the story of how, during the danger of a

raid upon a Christian home by the pagan persecutors, the parents fled away in fright and left their little infant girl in the care of a nurse. In their hurry and consternation they were unable to complete their arrangements for it, and so the nurse brought the child to the pagan magistrate.

What happened there is thus told by St. Cyprian: "Near an idol, to which the people flocked, they gave her bread steeped in wine, which had remained over from the immolations made by the passersby, because she could not at her age eat flesh meat."

When at last the mother succeeded in recovering the child she knew nothing of what had taken place before the idol. "Wherefore through ignorance it came to pass," St. Cyprian continues, "that the mother brought the child with her when I was offering Sacrifice [i.e. during the Holy Mass]. But the girl, thus associated with the sanctified, impatient of our ceremonial and prayers, began to be in turn convulsed with sobs and to break out in wailing." This might have been natural enough, but the Saint adds that though "still of infant years," she sought by every sign she could employ to make manifest a consciousness of what had happened.

"Now when at the conclusion of the solemnity the deacon began to offer the Chalice to the bystanders, and the others had received of it, as her own turn came, the little child, through an instinct of the Divine Majesty, turned away her face, firmly closed her lips, and refused the Chalice. The deacon, however, insisted, and though she struggled against it, he in-

fused the Sacrament of the Chalice." But the child could not retain this. "In the violated body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain."

Such, concludes St. Cyprian, "is the power of the Lord, such His Majesty" (*De Lapsis*, 25).

Whatever other conclusions we may draw from this narrative, it shows the faith of these Christians in the Divine Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which indeed was for them no mere sign or symbol, but the very "Body of the Lord," the "Holy of Holies."

Particularly beautiful is the freedom with which mothers, as we here see, could bring their little children and receive with them the Blessed Sacrament: the mothers indeed under both forms, but the children under one, yet both holding within them the same entire Christ, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. Incidentally we also behold here the deacon performing his usual function of distributing the Precious Blood, while Communion under the species of bread was given always by the celebrant.

The defilement of which St. Cyprian speaks had not reached the soul of the child, but God wished through that incident to teach a lesson which would strengthen these heroic Christians rather to suffer any form of martyrdom than be contaminated even in the least with idol worship.

But in quite other ways too, by signs and miracles, as St. Cyprian further testifies from personal experience, Almighty God brought home the reverence due the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. We

here touch on the case of those who actually received the Lord unworthily. Two instances are given of this by the Saint. It may be noted in passing that the word "Sacrifice" used below is the expression regularly employed by St. Cyprian for the Mass, as we ourselves commonly enough call it the "Divine Sacrifice." The Saint thus continues:

"But quite otherwise is the case of the woman, fully grown up and of mature age, who stole in secretly while I was offering Sacrifice. Taking to herself not food, but a sword, and giving admittance, as it were, to a deadly poison for herself between her mouth and breast, she began to be tortured and racked with mental agony, so that suffering no longer from the pressure of persecution, but from her own crime, she fell to the ground, palpitating and trembling. She who deceived man found in God an Avenger.

"And another, because he too dared when defiled by [pagan] sacrifice to receive a Part secretly with the rest, when Sacrifice [Mass] had been celebrated by the priest, was not able to eat and carry in his hand the Holy of the Lord, but found that he carried ashes in his open hands" (*De Lapsis*, 25).

Both the woman and the man here mentioned belonged to the class of the "lapsed," and both, it seems, had actually offered pagan sacrifice.

But we must not imagine that St. Cyprian was inexorable with those who had once failed under the violence of persecution. With the menace of a renewed bloody outbreak in view, he strongly expressed his desire that by all means they should be readmitted

to Communion. He even wished them to go every day, in order that thus, "fortified by the protection of the Body and Blood of Christ," they might be strengthened to encounter this new trial, to confess their Faith and shed their blood for Christ. Here are the Saint's own words:

"Since the Eucharist is consecrated in order that it may serve as a safeguard for those who receive it, and whom we desire to be safe against their adversary, it is well that we provide them with food of the Lord's abundance. For how shall we teach or stimulate them to pour forth their blood in the confession of the [Divine] Name, if we deny the Blood of Christ to those who are about to enter upon their struggle? Or how shall we render them fit for the cup of martyrdom, if we do not beforehand admit them to drink in the church of the Cup of the Lord by according to them the right of receiving Communion" (*Ep.* lvii, 2).

On the eve of their final combat, the soldiers of Christ should be ready to meet it, he writes in another letter, and therefore he argued that they should "daily drink the Chalice of the Blood of Christ, that so they may be able to give their own blood for the sake of Christ" (*Ep.* lviii, 1).

To explain the last quotations and to show further with what reverence the Eucharist was regarded, it should be mentioned here that an ecclesiastical council had decided that the *libellatici*, none of whom had actually offered sacrifice, might be readmitted after varying but always lengthy terms of canonical pen-

ance, according to the degree of their culpability. Those, however, who had actually sacrificed were not again to receive Communion, except in the hour of death. Even in that case it was not permitted to give it to them if they had delayed their sorrow and penance until the time of sickness.

When, however, by repeated celestial visions, as St. Cyprian tells us, the proximate outbreak of a new persecution had been revealed, another council was assembled, which decided to restore at once all those who were doing penance, that so they might draw from the Eucharist the necessary strength to pass through torture and death to the crown of a glorious martyrdom.

Not merely did St. Cyprian urge their admission to the Holy Mass and their consequent reception of Holy Communion, but he desired, as we have just seen, that they should approach daily to the Holy Table.

In conclusion no one can fail to see how clear is St. Cyprian's doctrine of the Real Presence. If at times he speaks of the symbolism of the signs of bread and wine — to which reference is made by certain critics — it is precisely as Catholics of today would speak of what they call the species of the bread and wine, understanding perfectly, as St. Cyprian did, that under these external species we have the true, real and substantial Body and Blood of Christ. On no other supposition could we explain the overwhelming significance attached to the reception of the Eucharist in the passages quoted here.

The soldier of Christ knew no less clearly that it was the real " Blood of the Lord " which he received in Holy Communion, than he understood that it was his own real blood which he would be called upon to shed in evidence of this truth. Such was the Faith St. Cyprian held in life, and such was the Faith which in death he sealed with his blood.

The judicial data of his martyrdom are preserved for us in the Proconsular Acts. Refusing to sacrifice to the idols, he promptly answered the judge that in such a proposal he could give no thought to any consequences that might befall him. It is comforting to note that as the sentence was passed, the multitude cried out aloud: " Let us be beheaded with him! " Taking off his dalmatic and standing in his tunic, ready for the execution, the heroic Bishop expressed his final will that twenty-five gold pieces be given to the executioner.

LAY COMMUNION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

THE entire discipline of the early Church in regard to the administration of Holy Communion is of exceptional interest.

That in connection with the Holy Sacrifice the laity received Communion under both species is well known. There is in this, however, nothing peculiar to the early Church, since the same custom was practically universal in the Western Church until the twelfth century, and has continued uninterruptedly in the Eastern Church to the present day, with the complete sanction of the Holy See.

At the same time it was clearly understood by the first Christians that Communion under one form only sufficed fully to satisfy the command of Christ, bidding us to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, if we would have eternal life. The reason for this has already been abundantly explained. By "concomitance" the Flesh of Christ is necessarily present with His Blood, and the Blood is inseparable from His Flesh, since He can now die no more. Hence under each species the entire Christ — Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity — comes to us, and under both

species, together we can thus receive no more than under one only.

Hence, too, in the early centuries Communion was ordinarily administered under one form only when given outside of Mass. Under the form of bread alone it was commonly brought to the sick, the imprisoned, and others who could not be present at the Sacred Mysteries. Under the form of wine alone, however, it was given to infants in direct connection with the Mass itself. We read in later centuries of the priest dipping his finger into the Precious Blood and depositing a drop upon the tongue of the child. St. Cyprian, as we have just seen, describes in the third century the deacon holding the Consecrated Chalice itself to the lips of the infant.

It is true that in St. Justin we also have apparently a reference to Communion brought to the absent under both species, but such may not have been his meaning and certainly was not the practice common during the first centuries.

It was, further, under the form of bread alone that people brought with them from the Divine Sacrifice the Holy Eucharist to communicate themselves in their own homes. Such at least is the practice noted in the earliest ecclesiastical writers, to which we shall later more fully refer.

In brief, the twofold Consecration at the Mass, which belongs to its very essence, implies also a twofold Communion for the celebrant. But in regard to the laity, there is no such direct obligation flowing from the Divine Sacrifice itself. Hence, it rests with

the Church to determine according to the peculiar needs of place or time, whether the Faithful should receive the Body and Blood of Christ, under one species or under both, since either way the Divine precept itself is fully satisfied. In making her decision it is the duty of the Church to provide alike for the welfare of her children and the reverence due the Sacrament.

We find little, if anything, in the first-century documents that gives us detailed information regarding the method of receiving Communion. We know that Our Lord communicated His Apostles under both forms at the Last Supper. No one doubts that at the Holy Sacrifice the early Christians received Communion in a similar way. The first definite references we have present this as the established usage. I need but recall the description of the people's Communion as given by St. Justin Martyr.

Soon one historic detail after another is added to our knowledge as time proceeds. Already in the writings of Origen, who died in the year 251, we meet with the form with which Communion is still introduced in all the Eastern rites: "Holy things for the holy" (*In Lev. hom.* xiii, 5).

The Eucharist was received standing, as Origen further tells us in his Homily on St. Luke (xv), and as the people still receive it in the Eastern Church.

The Body of Christ was given under the form of broken particles of the Consecrated Bread, that were placed on the right hand of the communicant. The men, we learn from later documents, received this on

the bare hand, but the women covered the hand with a small linen cloth, on which they received the Lord, as today the Sacred Body rests on the white corporal. This cloth came to be known as the *Dominicale*. Both men and women communicated themselves with the Eucharist thus given them. Tertullian, who lived to about the year 220, alludes to the great care taken by the Christians lest any Sacred Particles might fall to the ground (*De Corona* 3).

The chalice containing the Precious Blood was then set to their lips. Doubtless there was at first but one chalice out of which celebrant and Faithful partook, but as the congregations grew larger several chalices were consecrated at the same time. The custom at the Pope's Mass in Rome was to pour a few drops of the Precious Blood from the celebrant's chalice — from which Pope and clergy drank — into each of the other chalices that had been consecrated for the laity. The purpose of this action was to express symbolically the great truth that there is but one and the same Eucharist of which all partake alike, whether Pope, clergy or laity.

Another striking feature was connected from an early period with the distribution of the Eucharist, and became in fact an inviolable liturgical rule. It consisted in the custom that as the celebrant first gave the Consecrated Bread, so the deacon administered the Chalice after him. Definite mention is made of this also by Tertullian (*Ib.*), Cyprian (*De Lapsis* 25) and others. Everything, so far as possible, that is connected with the chalice, from the beginning to the

end of the Mass, ultimately became the deacon's function. He was the angel of the Grail.

St. Justin first mentions the giving of Communion by the deacon. The custom lasted for centuries until it finally disappeared both in the East and the West, although certain reminders of it still remain.

In the Apostolic Constitutions II great attention is given to the arrangement of the different orders of the clergy and of the Faithful during the Mass, so that each order may occupy its set place. The same care is taken in their approach to the Eucharistic table. Thus we read:

"When the Oblation has been made, let each one partake separately of the Lord's Body and the Precious Blood, approaching orderly and with reverence and holy fear, as to the Body of the King. The women, too, should approach with their heads veiled, as beseems their feminine order. But let the doors be guarded, lest any infidel, or one not yet initiated by Baptism, should enter" (lvii).

We here touch, of course, upon the strict discipline of the Secret, which particularly pertains to the Mystery of the Altar.

For the classical passage dealing with the reception of Communion by the laity we must turn to the account left us by St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his instructions to catechumens, a work which was written in the year 347. He there minutely explains the ceremonies of the Church, which at that time were in use both for the reception of the Consecrated Bread and of the Chalice.

St. Cyril begins by mentioning the invitation to Holy Communion given in the words: "Holy things for the holy; holy things for the saints," and then continues by describing first the method of receiving Our Divine Lord under the species of bread and thereafter under that of the wine. He says:

"Approaching, therefore, come not with the wrists extended, or the fingers open; but make thy left hand as if a throne for thy right, which is on the eve of receiving the King. And having hallowed thy palm, receive the Body of Christ, saying after it, 'Amen.' Then, after thou hast with carefulness hallowed thine eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake thereof, giving heed lest thou lose any of it, for what thou losest is a loss to thee, as it were, from one of thy own members. For tell me, if any one gave thee gold dust, wouldst thou not with all precaution keep it fast, being on thy guard against losing any of it and suffering loss? How much more cautiously, then wilt thou observe that not a crumb falls from thee of what is more precious than gold and precious stones!

"Then after having partaken of the Body of Christ, approach also to the cup of His Blood, not stretching forth thine hands, but bending and saying, in the way of worship and reverence, 'Amen,' be thou hallowed by partaking also of the Blood of Christ. And while the moisture is still upon thy lips, touching it with thine hands, hallow both thine eyes and brow and the other senses. Then wait for the prayer and give thanks to God, who hath accounted thee worthy

of so great mysteries" (Catechetical Lectures, lect. xxiii, Oxford translation).

We notice that the people are taught to give their response, "Amen," on receiving Communion. Tertullian mentions this answer at a much earlier date. In the Apostolic Constitutions VIII, it is given in reply first to the celebrant who says: "The Body of Christ," as he places the Consecrated Bread on the right hand of the communicant; and then in answer to the deacon who in administering the Chalice says: "The Blood of Christ, Chalice of life."

In the same book which is contemporaneous with Cyril's instructions, we find a long response previously given by the people before they approach the altar. The Communion ceremony there begins with the deacon calling the Faithful to attention: "Let us give heed." Then the Bishop utters his: "Holy things for the holy," after which the people exclaim: "One sole Holy, one sole Lord, one sole Jesus Christ, for the glory of God the Father, blessed for evermore. Amen. Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men. Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God. He has manifested Himself to us. Hosanna in the highest" (*Ib.* xiii). After that follows the Communion.

Needless to say this complete development had not yet taken place in the Apostolic Age, but it is not rash to conclude that the more simple practices underlying it were derived from that time, as we have found them in such earlier writers as Tertullian, Origen and

St. Cyprian. St. Dionysius of Alexandria, too, who died in the year 264, describes the communicant who has heard the Eucharistic Prayer, has answered "Amen" with the congregation, "has extended the hands to receive the Holy Food, and taken a share in the Body and Blood of Our Lord" (*Ep.* iv).

Referring to the continuation of the reception of Holy Communion under both species in the Oriental Churches today, I would say that the common way of administering the Eucharist at present is to dip the Consecrated Bread into the Chalice, and then by means of a spoon, to give Communion under both species to the recipient at the same time.

For the entire Western Church, Communion under one species only was prescribed by the Council of Constance, in 1414, which declared such Communion to be a real and true participation in both the Body and Blood of Christ.

FREQUENCY OF MASS AND THE RESERVED SACRAMENT

CHURCH discipline in regard to the frequency of Mass celebration has greatly varied with the centuries.

We know with certainty that daily Mass and Communion were the rule of the Apostolic Age immediately after the first Pentecost day. On this we have the definite statement of St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles that "daily" the Faithful continued "breaking bread from house to house" (11, 46). This implied, as we have seen, both the hearing of Mass and the receiving of Communion. A few verses previously the Evangelist had said of these first Christians that they were "persevering . . . in the communication of the breaking of bread" (42), that is, in the constant reception of the Eucharist.

Beyond this statement, however, we can learn nothing positive from the New Testament itself regarding the frequency of Mass and Communion during the Apostolic Age. Yet this in itself is quite enough for us to know, in order that we may strive to emulate in our own age the pristine eucharistic fervor of the newly founded Church.

Neither St. Clement of Rome nor St. Ignatius of Antioch, both writing at the end of the same first century, gives us any definite information as to the frequency of Mass and Communion at the close of the Apostolic Age. But they plainly show how the Christians throughout the world, then as before, led a truly eucharistic life.

When now we come to the " Didache," pertaining also to this period, and to the statements of Pliny and Justin in the following century, we find that all three refer only to the Christians meeting for their Sunday Mass and Communion. It would be rash, however, to draw sweeping conclusions from these isolated instances. They do not exclude a greater frequency of Mass. Yet it is clear that under the pressure of persecution, the gathering of the Christians, even once a week, must often have been highly hazardous.

But one fact stands out clearly. It is that every one heard Mass and communicated *at least* every Sunday, provided the bitterness of persecution did not prevent a Christian gathering. How much more frequently this may have been done during the course of the week, locally or in general, we simply do not know.

In the following century we again come at once upon definite references to daily Mass. We find these allusions in various passages in the writings of Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv, 26; *De Orat.* vi) and St. Cyprian (*Ep.* liv; *Ep.* lvii, 3, etc.). Both of these authors not merely speak of the daily celebration of

the Divine Sacrifice, but of its celebration now in the morning instead of in the evening, as had been the custom in the primitive Church.

At the same period Hippolytus writes: "Every day His precious and immaculate Body and His Blood are consecrated, and are offered on the Mystic and Divine table, in memory of that memorable first table of the mysterious Divine Banquet" (*In. Prov.;* Fortescue, "The Mass," 37).

It will also be remembered from the previous chapter dealing with St. Cyprian how insistently he urges Christians to receive Communion daily, and how in every detail his doctrine corresponds with that set forth in the Decree on Frequent and Daily Communion issued during the Pontificate of Pius X.

As a rule, the Bishop alone said Mass, at which the clergy like the laity received Holy Communion. Private and Low Masses, in our sense of the word, were unknown during all the early centuries that followed immediately upon the Apostolic Age. Mass was strictly a public and a very solemn function.

Although our investigation does not extend so far, yet I may briefly mention that after the third century, two very different periods succeeded each other. During the first, Mass was said several times a week only in various places of which we have definite knowledge. During the second it was often said several times in the same day by the same priests. In the twelfth century priests might even be permitted to offer it up three or four times a day — a privilege similar to that now allowed on two days of the entire

year only, Christmas and All Souls. Of Pope Leo III (795–816) we are told by Strabo that he occasionally said Mass no fewer than nine times on the same day. There were instances also when the laity was admitted to Communion more than once a day. Such at least were local practices.

In a word, to the Church has been given the custodianship of the Eucharist and it lies with her to decide for each period and locality what will be God's greater glory under the existing circumstances. Local or even more general abuses may creep in which call for rectification at the proper time by the watchful guardian of the interests of Christ. There is question here not of doctrine, but purely of discipline.

This brings us to another practice of the early Church which to us is perhaps the most interesting of all.

Not merely was the Sacred Body of Our Lord placed in the hands of the Faithful, during the first centuries, and they were then allowed to communicate themselves with it, but particles of the Consecrated Bread might even be taken home with them to their own houses. There they could privately administer the Eucharist to themselves.

For this purpose small caskets or similar becoming receptacles were used, in which, as in the priest's pyx of today, the Eucharist could be borne at the breast. It was then carefully set aside in their chamber, as the "Holy Thing of the Lord," the most precious Gift of God in their possession, the true and adorable Body of Christ, as they knew it to be, until the time came

when they meant to communicate themselves with it in all becoming devotion.

Not only was attendance at Mass without Holy Communion unthinkable to the early Christians, but they wished to receive the Sacred Body of their Lord also on days when no Mass could be heard by them. To satisfy this longing they were permitted, therefore, after consuming part of the Consecrated Bread given them at the Mass, thus to reserve the rest by placing it in the small casket at their breast, for future Communion in their homes. But the Eucharist might be thus reserved under the species of bread alone.

We are familiar, in this connection, with Tertullian's argument against mixed marriage. Exhorting a Christian woman not to marry a pagan husband, he warns her of the suspicions that would be aroused in her husband's mind when he would detect her privately communicating herself before she partook of any other food (*Ad Uxor* II, 5). This passage further implies that the Eucharist, under such circumstances was then received fasting.

Origen, too, refers to the Blessed Sacrament being sometimes taken home to be privately received there (*In Exod.* xiii, 3).

St. Cyprian, in his reference to unworthy Communions, gives instances which relate to this practice. Thus we are told by him that: "When a certain woman attempted with unworthy hands to open her casket, in which was the Holy Thing of the Lord, she was deterred from touching it by the flames which burst therefrom" (*De Lapsis*, 29).

In the book called " De Spectaculis," and ascribed to St. Cyprian, but now thought to have probably been written by Novatian, the sacrilegious case is supposed of a man who after the final " dismissal " at the Mass would go straight to attend a lewd show, " still carrying the Eucharist with him, *as he is wont to do*." (The last clause, it may be incidentally noted, seems to imply a very universal custom of taking the Most Blessed Sacrament to the home.) " This infidel," the author continues, strongly stigmatizing such a man, " introducing the Holy Body of Christ among the obscene bodies of harlots, deserves a worse damnation for his journey than for the pleasure of the show " (*Liber de Spectaculis*, 5).

All these instances definitely indicate the great reverence which the early Christians realized was to be given to the Reserved Sacrament.

The practice of carrying the Eucharist to the homes for private Communion continued for a considerable period. St. Basil tells us how in his day the Faithful in Egypt still observed it. Chardon, in his history of the Eucharist, even cites an example from the seventh century, where the Christian wife of an heretical husband receives the Blessed Sacrament from the hand of a neighboring woman (*Mist. de Sac. Euch.*, 783).

In the churches, as in the homes, the Eucharist was reserved ordinarily under the form of bread alone.

In the Age of the Apostles, as we may judge from the earliest pictures in the catacombs, no less than in the immediately subsequent periods, the Blessed

Sacrament was placed in wicker baskets, beautifully shaped.

In one of the very earliest eucharistic symbols preserved in the catacombs today we distinctly behold the Consecrated Wine in a glass vase placed in the middle of such a basket, with the Loaves on the top. The fresco on the wall, painted in the period touching most closely on the Apostolic Age and practically belonging to it, is paralleled perfectly in a description of the Eucharist given by St. Jerome in his own time several centuries later. But this subject will be discussed more fully in our chapter on the *Ichthus*, or Fish Symbol.

In the Apostolic Constitutions VIII the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament in the church itself is briefly described in these words: " And when all the men and women shall have communicated, let the deacons take up what is left [i.e. of the Blessed Sacrament] and place it in tabernacles " (xiii).

Devotion to the Reserved Sacrament is as old as the days of the Apostles. But there were then no special public devotions to it, as we have them now. The Eucharist was at first reserved in some becoming place, and later in the sacristy, when this developed. Then it was next placed in the churches themselves, and ultimately set in a fitting receptacle on the altar, or suspended over it, often in a vessel which was given the shape of a silver or golden dove, until the tabernacle, in our sense of the word, came into being.

We no longer have the privilege the early Christians enjoyed of taking the Blessed Sacrament with

them, to reserve it in their homes with all proper veneration, and there privately to communicate themselves. But we have instead other opportunities connected with our more completely developed public cultus: our expositions, benedictions, processions and forty-hour devotions, not to mention the attraction which the silent Tabernacle in our churches exercises, whence Jesus draws us ever more closely to Himself. Besides we have the inexpressible privilege, precisely as it was accorded to the first Christians, that we may daily receive Him in Holy Communion. It is even the express desire of the Holy See that *all*, so far as possible, should do so. There is no parish where the altar rails should not be crowded every morning.

We should, then, strain every nerve to bring it about once more that the Faithful may again return to the primitive custom of receiving their Eucharistic Lord, as the Council of Trent says, not merely spiritually but sacramentally each day that they attend Holy Mass. Nothing can be more deplorable, and nothing in fact is more deplored by the Church, than that this custom should have gone out of existence, after continuing for so many centuries.

While mere attendance at the Mass suffices to assure us an actual part in the Sacrifice and its benefits, and we may thus hear several Masses on the same day, though we communicate but once, yet the most perfect participation in the Sacrifice takes place only when Holy Communion is also received by us. Thus shall we renew again the practice of the first Chris-

tians in their Communication of the Breaking of Bread. All should not merely passively " hear " Mass, but strive to participate in it to the utmost extent possible, and as frequently as possible.

The privilege of receiving Communion in their homes when Mass could not be attended may have simply arisen out of the persecutions to which the Christians of the first centuries were continually exposed.

Let us understand that from the days of Nero, at the very beginning of Christianity, on to the triumphant accession of Constantine — in brief, from the first to the fourth century — there existed what we can best describe as a permanent state of persecution, more or less severe, and with shorter or longer intervals of a precarious peace. These lulls in the storm might at any moment be broken again by a new and violent outburst of frenzied intolerance. Men and women attended even their Sunday Mass at the risk of imprisonment, of unspeakable tortures, and death. At the least, they might find themselves reduced, by the confiscation of their worldly goods, from perhaps a state of affluence to one of absolute beggary.

These were no slight sacrifices, but many brought them joyfully to their Eucharistic God, even if human nature often winced beneath such trials. Yet the grace of God mightily sustained them, which is always made equal at least to the existing needs, and which overflowed in His saints. What the flesh is too weak to bear, the grace of God makes possible and

perhaps even easy in the hour of trial. He does not forsake those who trust in Him.

We can well appreciate, therefore, what a joy and blessing it was for the heroic Christians of those days to be privileged to take with them into their homes " the Holy Thing of the Lord," Christ truly present under the humble species of bread, God Incarnate abiding under their roof. However lowly these homes might be, they could not be poorer than the stable of Bethlehem, where He was bedded on the straw of the manger. It was not the wealth that counted, but the love.

The Catholics of today who, in times of peace, fail through their own negligence to avail themselves of the inestimable opportunities of frequent and daily Communion, not merely offered them so generously, but urged upon them by the Church in our age, should surely blush for shame at their coldness and indifference. Above all they should resolve to arise to a new and truly eucharistic life, such as every genuine Christian should lead.

The familiarity, finally, which was allowed the first Christians in the handling of the Sacred Body of Christ, in bearing it on their persons, and keeping it in their homes, did not beget any loss of reverence. We need here but recall the instance of the heroic Tarcisius, most probably a deacon, killed in the persecution of Valerian, while carrying with him the Blessed Sacrament to bring it to the imprisoned Christians. It was Pope Damasus (366–384) who

years later composed that famous epitaph which was inscribed over the martyr's shrine:

TARCISIVM SANCTVM CHRISTI SACRAMENTA FERENTEM
CVM MALESANA MANVS PETERET VULGARE PROFANIS
IPSE ANIMAM POTIVS VOLVIT DIMITTERE CAESVS
PRODERE QVAM CANIBVS RABIDIS CAELESTIA MEMBRA

"When the evil-minded mob would profanely treat holy Tarcisius, bearing the Sacrament of Christ, he willed to yield up his life beneath their blows, rather than betray to maddened dogs the Heavenly Members."

The cult of the Reserved Sacrament, of the Glorified Christ, truly, really and substantially present in all His "Heavenly Members," wholly and entirely under the Eucharistic species, has ever been substantially the same, in the latest century as in the first. It differs only, as I have said, in the more public form of that worship bestowed in our age. Nor does this necessarily imply a greater, but only, in certain regards, a differently manifested homage, rendered to the Divine Redeemer, sacramentally present in our midst.

Before that Reserved Sacrament, where God Incarnate is completely veiled from view, as His Divinity alone was hidden in the Crib, we ardently send up our prayers and our love, but the early Christian did still more — he poured forth his blood.

Which was the greater faith in the Real Presence? Which was the greater love?

The Voice of the Monuments

THE ICHTHUS SYMBOL AND THE EUCHARIST

BESIDES the Scriptures and earliest ecclesiastical writings, hitherto considered, we have still another source from which our knowledge of the Eucharist in Apostolic times is derived. This consists in the earliest Christian monuments and inscriptions which bring us back to a period immediately following the Apostolic Age and can therefore be trusted to convey to us accurately the traditions of the men who daily conversed with Our Lord and who saw and heard Him when He was risen from the dead.

The monuments of that early age, let us remember, were produced in the days of persecution, when it was imperative that nothing which could disclose the mysteries of the Faith should fall under the pagan eye. Sacred things would thus only be profaned and exposed to ridicule and blasphemy.

We recall in this connection the familiar *graffito* of the Crucifixion, which was roughly scratched on a wall of the Palatine. It represented a man with an ass' head

fastened to a T-shaped cross. Before the figure another man was standing with his left arm raised in worship. The inscription scrawled under it, in irregular lettering, read: " Alexamenes worships his God."

I have instanced already the verdict of Pliny on what was evidently the Mystery of the Eucharist, as it was apparently made known to him by the heroic Christian women whom he ordered to be tortured that he might so question them regarding the Christian assemblies. Like St. Justin the Martyr, they doubtless believed it opportune to explain at least in some manner, the Holy Mass and Communion, since this was the reason for their principal Sunday gathering. Yet Pliny's summary to the Emperor of all that he had learned on that occasion simply was: " Base and extravagant superstition."

The Christians, therefore, in their monuments habitually used a language of symbolism, as undecipherable to the uninitiated as Egyptian hieroglyphics are to us.

The monuments that remain from the earliest period are practically all pictorial, consisting of the frescoes in the catacombs, where under veiled imagery the artists represented the truths and mysteries of their Holy Faith. Statuary work could not conveniently be produced there.

The dearth of monuments and memorials of any kind at Rome, such as might recall to us the first Christian centuries, except for the catacomb relics, is due to the universal destruction systematically carried out by Diocletian in the tenth and last persecu-

tion. At that time almost every ancient record and landmark of Christianity was utterly obliterated.

The catacombs, on the other hand, are rich in treasures, and their history, as it has been said, probably begins with the burial of the first Roman Christian. Various cemeteries, in fact, are ascribed to Apostolic times, nor need we hesitate to accept the accuracy of such statements. In answer to the question whether traces of Apostolic antiquity remain in the catacombs, De Rossi wrote:

" Precisely in those cemeteries to which history or tradition assigns apostolic origin, I see, in the light of the most searching archeological criticism, the cradle of Christian art and of Christian inscriptions. There I find memorials of persons who appear to belong to the times of the Flavii and of Trajan; and finally discover precise dates of these times " (" Roma Sotteranea," I, 185).

The Eucharistic monuments I shall here consider all date back to a much earlier period, following directly upon the Apostolic Age. Some of them are almost, if not actually, contemporaneous with the last days of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, Our Lord's beloved Disciple. They consist mainly of symbolic paintings, completely veiling their meaning from the uninitiated. But for the fully instructed Christians of those days they were intelligible at a glance.

The symbol of greatest importance, and the most difficult for the pagan mind to penetrate, was that of the fish, which stood for Christ, although it might

also have a secondary meaning, which I shall later indicate.

The symbol itself was purely arbitrary. Taking the first letter of each of the five Greek words signifying, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour" (*Ιησοῦς χριστός, θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ*), the Apostolic Christians had as a result the alphabetic sequence, "I-ch-th-u-s" (*ἰχθύς*). Combining these letters they found that it gave them the Greek word *Ichthus*, signifying "Fish." Thus, it came about that under this commonplace symbol was safely hidden a brief and comprehensive summary of the Christian Faith regarding Our Divine Lord, specifying, together with the unity of Person, His humanity, His Divinity, and His work of Redemption wherein lay the purpose of the Incarnation. A short word and a plain symbol, but compact of more wisdom than could be gathered from all the literature of Greece and Rome!

It is easy to realize, therefore, why this Ichthus emblem should quickly have become so universally popular during the entire epoch of secrecy and persecution, as with the closing of this period it also practically passed out of common usage. In the meantime it had served a valuable purpose. The Christian wearing it as an ornament or distinction could at once be recognized by his fellow Christian the world over, for it is remarkable with what rapidity this secret code of symbolism spread in the early centuries of our Faith, keeping pace with the propagation of Christianity itself.

Hence, we not merely find the fish as the most im-

portant symbol in the eucharistic monuments now to be examined, but we also note the multitude of little fish emblems, carved out of crystal, ivory, mother of pearl, enamel or precious stones, which have been discovered in the catacomb graves. Of these images some were especially designed to be worn about the neck.

By combining a fish with other symbols the most diverse ideas could be expressed, all of which the Christians of this period could readily understand at first glance.

Let us take as an instance the combination of the fish and dove symbols. The dove signified for the Faithful of these centuries a disembodied Christian soul, unless indeed the surroundings themselves made plain that the reference was had to the Holy Ghost. A dove, therefore, with an olive branch of peace in its beak, graven on a tomb, expressed the idea of the soul of the deceased resting in peace. When now the fish was added, this same thought was further amplified to signifiy: " May thy spirit rest in the peace of Christ," or else " His soul is in peace with Christ."

Combining the fish, which was often represented as a dolphin, with an anchor, the meaning was: " Hope in Christ." Frequently the fish was seen upbearing a ship or swimming alongside it. This was a hieroglyphic sermon teaching how Christ, the Divine Ichthus, supports His Church and watches over it, so that no persecution can ever overwhelm it.

But there is one combination only with which we are here directly concerned, and that is the juxtaposi-

tion of fish and bread, which for the Apostolic Christians signified in unmistakable terms the Eucharist.

That there is some allusion in this combination of bread and fish to the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes, twice repeated by Our Lord, is obvious enough. But this miracle itself was inseparably connected, in the minds of the early Christians with the Eucharist. And quite rightly so, for St. John in his sixth chapter definitely shows the association of this miracle with the Promise of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Our Lord, too, in making that Promise, begins with directly taking cognizance of that same miracle worked on the previous day.

Nothing, certainly, was more closely associated in the thoughts of these Christians with the Eucharist than the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. But in representing the latter miracle, they ordinarily paid but little regard to historic details, and so made plain that it was only as a symbol of the Eucharist they were using it. The repast of the multitude in particular represented the Communion of the Faithful. Moreover the favorite place for such allusions was precisely where the Eucharist was offered and in connection with other eucharistic symbols.

After these introductory remarks, whose truth will become more apparent as we proceed, let us begin with one of the simplest and at the same time most explicit of all eucharistic symbols in the catacombs.

In a most ancient chamber of the Catacombs of St. Callixtus, in the crypt of St. Lucina, are two small paintings, symmetrically placed to either side of what

was originally a larger picture. The latter, which unfortunately has been destroyed, represented probably a eucharistic repast. The date assigned to these paintings by most expert authorities is the very beginning of the second century, let us say about the year 110. They may practically be regarded, therefore, as still belonging to the Apostolic Age. Today they are among the most familiar objects of catacomb art.

Each of the two paintings represents nothing else than a fish with a wicker basket on his back, or, as Wilpert believes, placed at his side ("Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms," 286, 7). The baskets are woven of osiers and filled with loaves at the top, but in the middle, through the wicker work, purposely and very artistically left wide open there, we behold a large glass plainly filled with red wine.

Here, then, we have the symbol of the Eucharist clearly and fully set before us, which the Christians of that day, many of whom had listened to the preaching of the Apostles, could not fail to comprehend at a single glance.

The loaves, under which form the bread was then still consecrated at the altar, and the wine in its glass chalice or receptacle, represented to them the outward form or appearance, the species as we say today, of the Sacrament, all that they actually beheld in the hands of the priest at the altar. But the fish, the Ichthus, represented no less clearly the true and real substance of the Sacrament, all that they actually received under those outward semblances, namely: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." In a word the

picture signified to them Jesus Christ giving Himself to be their food and drink, under the appearance of bread and wine.

There, then, was the whole doctrine of the Eucharist set forth with a clarity not to be surpassed, theologically accurate and complete. In a word, what they beheld was bread and wine; what they received was Christ. That is what the picture told them. It is the doctrine of the Transubstantiation.

On this subject indeed there was no uncertainty and no misconception among the early Christians. The subtleties of modern innovators were undreamed of by them. All they knew and all they cared to know was that what before the Consecration had been bread and wine was now their Ichthus, Jesus Christ, present whole and entire, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. But this they knew with a Divine certainty, for Christ had told them, who could not be mistaken, who could not deceive, for He was: " Son of God, Saviour."

De Rossi, when first he saw this picture, as he himself tells us, was at once irresistibly reminded of a passage from St. Jerome which will doubtless remain inseparably associated with it. It occurs in a letter to Rusticus, wherein the Saint referred to Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse. The latter, we learn, had bestowed all his worldly goods on the poor.

" Yet," continued St. Jerome in allusion to him, " no one can be richer than he who carries the Body of Christ in a basket made of twigs and the Blood of Christ in a chalice of glass " (*Ep.* 125, *Ad Rusticum*).

The use of the wicker basket for the Consecrated

Bread, so familiar in the early days of the Church, appears therefore to have continued uninterruptedly down to the days of Jerome, while his chalice of glass conforms entirely with our picture. Baskets of wickerwork, it is well known, were also employed by the Jews in their sacrificial rites and even by the Gentiles. It was therefore quite natural for the early converts, whether from Judaism or paganism, to have used the same receptacle for what was most sacred upon earth, the Eucharist.

So we can realize, even at this distance of time, what the simple little picture meant for the early Christians. It expressed to their minds the complete eucharistic truth, more clearly perhaps than the Catholic of today recalls it when he looks upon his own far more literal symbol of Christ, in sacerdotal vestments, holding in His hands the golden chalice, with a large white Host suspended over it. Yet both these pictures express the selfsame truth.

Of just about the same date as the small fresco we have thus far considered is the *Fractio Panis,* or "Breaking of Bread," the first real Mass picture known to us. Msgr. Wilpert, its discoverer, who has devoted an entire volume to its discussion, considers it to be without any question, the authentic representation of a Mass in a catacomb chamber. Yet it must not be overlooked that at the same time a great deal of purest symbolism runs through the realism of this picture. It is in fact the symbolism itself which at once unmistakably indicates the eucharistic nature of the subject represented.

The now famous fresco of the *Fractio Panis* was discovered in the Greek Chapel of the Catacomb of St. Priscilla, and is without doubt one of the most precious historic relics in existence. Seven persons are represented in the scene: the celebrating Bishop, five men and one woman. The latter is wearing the veil as was then the custom for women at the Eucharistic Services. The worshipers are reclined, according to Roman custom, on the semicircular sofa that curves about the farther side of the eucharistic table, on which appear a dish with two fishes and a plate with five loaves. This symbolism definitely indicates the eucharistic nature of the Banquet, referring us back to its Biblical prototype, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, intimately connected with the Eucharist in the catacombs.

This is further confirmed by the wicker baskets filled with loaves which stretch out in a row to each side of the picture. Moreover the number seven is a number sacred to the eucharistic repasts in catacomb symbolism. Every detail of this, therefore, makes plain beyond doubt the eucharistic character of the picture. But besides the symbols, we have here a real Mass.

The five men attending the Sacrifice are clothed in tunics, whereas the celebrant, who alone is bearded, apparently wears a tunic and pallium which it is thought would seem to designate him as a bishop. It was of course the bishop who ordinarily said the Mass. The event actually represented is probably the celebration of a funeral Mass at which some noted Christian family, to whom this very chapel belonged,

commemorated its dead. Some real personages may, therefore, have been here depicted, while others may have simply been introduced to complete the symbolic number seven. The features of the woman worshiper are very distinctive.

The part of the Mass which was chosen for representation by the artist is the moment of the Breaking of the Bread, whence the Mass in Apostolic times took its name. The celebrant is seated on a small bench, his arms stretched out before him, while with an energetic action he is breaking the Consecrated Loaf, on which his whole being seems concentrated. Near him is the plain, two-handled cup which served for the chalice of the Mass.

The picture, in fine, is directly over the place where the actual altar stood and the Divine Sacrifice was offered up. It is not at all impossible that the very celebrant in this Mass picture might have been ordained by the hands of one of the Apostles.

EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY IN CATACOMB PICTURES

OF supreme interest in connection with the Eucharist are the frescoes still preserved in the two oldest chambers of the so-called Chapel of the Sacraments in the Catacombs of St. Callixtus. They constitute, in part, a theology of the Eucharist in colors, and are not very much later than the pictures already studied. Every detail regarding them has been carefully scrutinized by the most expert authorities in this field, and equal attention has been paid to faithful reproduction, so that now, if we cannot go to the catacombs, the catacombs can be brought to us.

But the Eucharist is not the only subject treated here. There is one other Sacrament which in these paintings, as in the writings of the early Church, is always most closely associated with it, and that is the Sacrament of Baptism. In view, therefore, of the intimate connection observed here, we also shall study these subjects in their relation to one another.

It is clear, of course, that at every period Baptism must always be understood as the first condition for

the reception of the Eucharist. Yet there is a special reason why the relation between these two Sacraments was particularly stressed during the first centuries of Christianity, and that is to be found in the proportionately large number of adult converts who were then baptized.

It was a normal event to see these newly gained converts receiving the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist in immediate succession on the very same occasion. From the Baptismal font they were directly admitted to the Holy Mass for the first time, and there partook with all the Faithful of the Body and Blood of Christ.

We recall how St. Justin describes a special Mass, known as the Baptismal Mass, where the ceremonies of the administration of Baptism supplied the place of the ordinary introductory part of the Eucharistic Services, so that from the rite of the Sacrament of regeneration the Bishop passed immediately to the Prayer of the Faithful and the Offertory, and thence on to the solemn part of the Mass proper, the Consecration Prayer.

Realizing thus, the intimate association between these two Sacraments in the mind of the early Christian, let us take full account of them both as we find them placed here in their proper and beautiful relation to each other.

Entering, therefore, the first of the two chambers of the Sacraments, we notice at once a series of frescoes along the walls. The nearest of these pictures, that immediately to the left of the door through which we

came, presents the symbolic scene of Moses striking the rock, from which water gushes forth.

That rock, as the first Christians understood in common with us, is Christ, from whose side on the Cross water flowed mingled with blood. The water is taken as symbolic of the Sacrament of Baptism, the blood as symbolic of the Eucharist. Moses, striking that rock, was equally regarded by these earliest believers as typical of Peter. To make this clear beyond any doubt they often represented Peter himself in the place of Moses. It was the symbol alone that mattered to them and Peter, as Prudentius appositely remarked, was appointed to hold the place of Moses as "the leader of the New Israel."

The great doctrines of Christ as the rock (I Cor. x, 3), and of Peter as possessed of the authority to draw for us out of this rock the floods of sacramental grace, which all begin with Holy Baptism — two truths equally Scriptural — were profoundly impressed on the minds of these early Christians. Nothing could better express for them the unity of the one Faith than the picture of Christ the Rock, with the baptismal font derived from Him, and the power of St. Peter shown connected with this in his position as the visible head of the Church (Cyprian, *Ep. ad Jub.*). The symbolic representation of one Christ, one Baptism, one Supreme Pontiff thus became a central idea of catacomb art. Hence the frequency with which this picture of Peter striking the rock meets us on the walls of the subterranean chambers, or on the sides of the early Christian sarcophagi, or even in the

peculiar gold leaf designs on the bottom of the gilded glass cups.

In the present instance, however, the painting, while expressing these same ideas, remains entirely symbolical. No familiar personal characteristics are given the figure here pictured as striking the rock and clothed merely in the *pallium*. It recalls the words of Tertullian regarding Holy Baptism: "This is the water which from the Rock flowed down to the people" (*De Bapt.* 9). But in the full symbolic interpretation of those early Christians Peter took the place of Moses.

Tertullian is one of the earliest of our ecclesiastical writers. It is not at all improbable that he may have often viewed these very paintings, since he was at Rome at the very time when their colors were still fresh on the walls. It will be interesting, therefore, to note how another thought expressed by him is illustrated in the very next picture we are to view, and which also might well have been his mind at the time he wrote.

It is the picture of a fisherman, girded about the loins, and seated on a rock. With a hook he draws a small fish out of the water that flows at his feet. Now listen to what Tertullian says: *Sed nos pisciculi*, "But we are little fishes." And then he adds: *secundum Piscen nostrum Jesum Christum*, "conformed to the likeness of our Ichthus, Jesus Christ."

Since we are begotten to our new life of grace in the waters of Holy Baptism, what could be more fitting than thus to refer to the regenerated souls as the

" little fishes " who partake through Divine grace of the nature of the great and true Ichthus, Christ! " Ye are gods," are the strong words of the Scriptures themselves.

It has been remarked that the hook, and not the net, is used here, because we receive Baptism indidividually, and the artist wished to indicate that the new life of sanctifying grace is bestowed upon each one singly. There is something intensely personal about the reception of this great Sacrament, in which the new Christian is begotten in a new birth of supernatural life.

The third picture on this same wall is therefore actually the performance of an individual Baptism. But even here symbolism is not discarded. The person receiving the Sacrament is a young boy. By this choice the artist merely wished symbolically to express the idea that the neophytes preparing for Baptism were regarded as children in the early Church, and in fact were called so. *Infantes, pueri,* are the words applied to them. In our scene the convert stands ankle-deep in the water, while the minister of the Sacrament, girded for the task, is generously pouring the ablution over his head.

Finally there is the fourth painting which still continues our present subject. It is intended to bring home in the same symbolic way the spiritual effectiveness of the Sacrament of Baptism. A paralytic is seen carrying his bed upon his shoulders. The reference is thought to be to the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, which the early ecclesiastical writers, including Ter-

tullian (*De Bapt.* 4), interpreted as symbolizing the salutary power of this Sacrament of regeneration.

Thus the artist fittingly concluded his series of baptismal pictures, which, here as in other similar instances, was an introduction to the pictures on the Eucharist. These immediately follow on the next wall. They are three in number and cover the center main wall of the chamber, that, namely, which faced us on our entering the room.

The first of these frescoes represents the Consecration; the second the Eucharist as a Sacrament; the third, the Eucharist as a Sacrifice. The same thorough and profound treatment which was given to the Sacrament of Baptism is therefore accorded also to the Eucharist. Again the method of dealing with the subject is entirely symbolical.

The complete trilogy consists, therefore, of a large central fresco of the Eucharistic Banquet, with the two smaller symbolic paintings of the Consecration to the one side and of the Mass as a Sacrifice to the other. The central importance is thus given to the eating and drinking of the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man which Christ requited of us that we might have eternal life (John vi, 54, 55).

But let us begin with the picture which naturally enough follows first of all upon the baptismal scenes. It is the Consecration with which the Eucharist itself, as a Sacrament, must take its beginning.

The Consecration is represented as taking place on a small tripod table, doubtless recalling to the minds of the early Christians the Mystery of the Blessed

Trinity. On the table are a loaf and a fish, thus conveying immediately the entire idea of the Transubstantiation. The significance, namely, of this combination, as already explained and as perfectly comprehended by even the least cultured of the early Christians, was that the bread shown on the one side was to be changed into the fish shown on the other, representing the Divine Ichthus: " Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."

With the Apostolic teaching fresh in their minds, these Christians thus clearly understood what we mean today both by " transubstantiation " and " concomitance." We are merely using modern words for ancient ideas; new expressions for the same truths which the artist here so succinctly and so plainly told his fellow-Christians, that, namely, the bread should be changed substantially, despite all outward appearances, into the Flesh of Christ; and that, further, with this Flesh would be present also the entire Christ: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. This is no refinement of interpretation, but only the simple and complete truth which these pictures expressed with theological accuracy.

To either side of the table stands a human figure. The person to our right is the sacrificial priest. Wilpert regards him as Christ Himself. Certainly we have here a symbolic figure, clothed in pallium only, with right shoulder and side bare, stretching out his hands over the tripod altar on which are lying a loaf of bread and a fish. The action is accepted by our great Christian archeologists as unquestionably picturing

the moment of Consecration, at which the loaf before the priest is changed into the Ichthus, Jesus Christ. On this point Wilpert, De Rossi, Marucchi, Leclercq, and others of high esteem are all agreed.

But we must remember that the picture is purely symbolic and must not urge too strongly any deductions as to the form of the altar, the apparel of the priest, and other circumstances, just as the entire idea of Transubstantiation is conveyed by the loaf alone which is changed into the Ichthus, without any indication of the wine which is equally changed into Him.

On the side of the altar opposite the priest stands the familiar female figure of the *Orante*, fully robed, with arms and hands lifted up in prayer. The *Orante* may signify a disembodied Christian soul, now in bliss through the efficacy of the Sacrifice, but the explanation which is taken to be more likely is that here the Church herself is symbolized uniting her prayers with the Sacrifice of the Altar.

St. Paul pictures the Church as the Bride of Christ, and so the same symbolism is found in the earliest ecclesiastical writers.

This view still leaves open that other interpretation which would here see in the *Orante*, our Blessed Lady, in whom these earliest Christians, as we know from their writings, saw the mother of all who live by grace, the mother of all the Faithful through the ages. The picture of our Lady is in fact among the very earliest found in the catacombs. The representation of her with the Christ Child in her arms, and

the Prophet Isaias at her side, pointing to the star, symbolic of the Messianic Prophecies, is familiar to every one. De Rossi regarded it as probably a work of the first century.

This now brings us to the central fresco of our trilogy, the Eucharistic Repast or Holy Communion. Once more the spirit of symbolism runs through every detail. If anywhere, then surely here, in these eucharistic scenes, everything was to be safely guarded from the profane. The initiated only must be able to read what these pictures mean. Even the catechumens themselves were not yet to be given the key to the secrets, so vigilantly guarded, as too sacred for any except the Faithful alone. Such was the discipline of the Church, originating during the centuries of persecution and prolonged beyond them.

Turning, then, to our picture, we behold the usual semicircular table at which seven feasters recline according to the wont of their day. The reason for the number seven we shall shortly see. The figures are all male and fully garbed. On the table before them are just two plates containing the bread and fish. We know therefore that there is question of the Eucharistic Banquet.

The Eucharistic character of the picture is further emphasized by the eight wicker baskets standing on the floor in the foreground, each filled with loaves. The number eight is not historical in any way, but is used merely for the sake of symmetry, since the symbolism, again, and not the history is to be stressed.

The reference, of course, is to the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, but purely as a Biblical prototype of the Eucharist.

The feasters, I have said, are all male. This is a convention observed during the first centuries for the symbolic representation of the Eucharistic Repast. If a woman were present in the picture it might be meant for some realistic scene like the *Fractio Panis*, or else an *Agape*, or finally the Heavenly Banquet in Paradise. Nor would the number seven be adhered to in these latter scenes. But the absence of women from the symbol of the Eucharistic Repast, it appears to me, can perhaps be accounted for by the desire of the artists to follow the Last Supper at which the Disciples alone were present.

But why, then, it will at once be asked, the number seven?

The answer is, because in the symbolism of the early Christians, that number always signified universality. In the present instance it implied that at the Banquet of the Eucharist, which is here symbolized, all the Christians throughout the entire world partake.

Just as in the preceding figure the *Orante*, if taken for the Church, represented all the Faithful as participating in the Holy Mass, so without any question here the mystic number seven represents all who through Baptism are qualified to receive the Eucharistic Sacrament.

No less clear is the meaning of the last scene of our trilogy. It is the symbolic picture of the Sacrifice of

Abraham, which again is used merely as a Biblical prototype to symbolize the Eucharist as a Sacrifice. Historical details are therefore freely disregarded.

In our day the Crucifixion, in connection with the Mass, expresses that same idea. But the Crucifixion was never pictorially represented in those days. It was too sacred to be obtruded on the eyes of the pagans, who might behold it and ridicule it, as we found was actually done in the *graffito* of the Palatine, which I have already discussed. What better substitute, then, could be suggested to express the sacrificial nature of the Mass than the sacrifice which Abraham was ready to make of his son Isaac, who himself carried the wood for his own oblation as Christ carried His Cross to Calvary? But in Abraham's sacrifice God substituted a ram for the human victim, so that here we have further the idea of a vicarious sacrifice such as the Lamb of God made for us.

All this is very beautiful and very true. All this, too, the artist fully understood. But we must further know that these early Christians had entirely their own way of symbolically expressing their thoughts. So in place of representing Abraham with the knife held over Isaac, as elsewhere they historically painted this scene, or of showing Isaac carrying the wood of the sacrifice on his shoulders, as Christ was to carry His Cross, the artist here pictured Abraham and Isaac standing, side by side, with uplifted arms, like the *Orante*. Abraham can be distinguished as considerably

the taller of the two figures, while the ram and the bundle of fagots at their side make the Biblical reference in the scene unmistakable.

The Sacrifice of Abraham, I may add, was represented on various objects connected with the Eucharist in the early Church, such as pyxes in which the Blessed Sacrament was carried.

Thus then the Eucharist has been explained to us as thoroughly as the Sacrament of Baptism, with one single exception. We beheld the Consecration with which the Eucharist begins, from that we passed on to the pictorial exposition of its twofold aspect, as Sacrament and Sacrifice. Only one thing, therefore, remains to be shown, and that is the illustration, as in the case of Baptism, of the effects of the Eucharist.

The concluding symbol of Baptism was the paralytic carrying his own bed. The cure of this man, wrought in the waters of the miraculous pool, was used to suggest how the waters of Baptism bestow new life. Such was the train of thought. Are we to think that the mind which conceived the sequence of those remarkable baptismal symbols did not equally carry out to its ultimate perfection its eucharistic lesson? Let us see.

Turning toward the next wall on which our subject might possibly have been continued, we find the paintings which Tertullian and Prudentius may have once admired there, now entirely destroyed. And yet, fortunately for our study, we can with practical certainty state precisely what picture followed in the

sequence. It was the Raising of Lazarus. The reason for this deduction is very simple.

In the adjoining chamber to which I have already referred, and into which we shall enter later, we find that, with certain variations, the same general treatment of the two Sacraments is carried out as here. Both chambers belong to the same period. But to our delight we discover that in the former, the series of eucharistic frescoes terminates with that most appropriate picture, which we may rightly presume has been destroyed here, the Raising of Lazarus.

This symbol of the Eucharist precisely parallels the picture of the paralytic as a symbol of Baptism. The connection is in fact much more clear and obvious, while it displays the same methods of association, the same practical turn of mind in the master theologian and Scripture scholar who outlined the designs for these chambers.

To manifest the appropriateness of the Raising of Lazarus as a eucharistic symbol, expressing the effects of Holy Communion, we need do no more than quote the words of Our Lord's own promise:

"Then Jesus said to them: Amen, Amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: *and I will raise him up in the last day*" (John vi, 54, 55).

In a word, the symbol of the Raising of Lazarus, connected directly with the Eucharistic Repast, as we find it in the second chapel, brought home to the

Christians in the catacombs precisely what we saw that St. Irenaeus was at just about the same time striving to bring home to the heretics at Lyons: that a special fruit of the Eucharist is the resurrection of our bodies themselves unto an eternal life of glory. Such is the promise of Christ. Could anything more beautiful conclude this catacomb theology of the Eucharist, whose doctrine has remained unchanged through all the centuries of Christianity in the Catholic Church?

THE EUCHARISTIC BANQUET IN CATACOMB PAINTINGS

ENTERING the second of the two most ancient chambers of the Chapel of the Sacraments the eucharistic keynote is struck for us at once by the fresco on the vault.

Again we behold there the tripod altar. Two loaves are placed on it and one fish, familiar symbols of the Mystery of Faith. To the one side of the altar are four wicker baskets filled with loaves, and to the other are three. This gives us the number seven, doubtless referring here also to the entire multitude of believers who over all the earth partake of the Ichthus Christ, multiplied for them as many times as there are Consecrated Loaves to be given out in Holy Communion. Thus the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is perpetually renewed in a mystic way, and far more wonderfully than when with five loaves and two fishes Christ fed the five thousand men, together with those other thousands of women and children, who had followed Him out into that uninhabited, mountainous place.

On the wall we find first a repetition of the Striking of the Rock and of the fisherman drawing forth

with his hook the small fish out of the water. Here, as before, these symbols of the Sacrament of Baptism serve again as an introduction to the Eucharist. There is one picture only that we need especially to consider, since all else is already sufficiently familiar. This is a fresco illustrating one of the most important eucharistic symbols of the early Church.

Seven persons are seen reclining at the usual semicircular eucharistic table. They are represented as bare from the waist upward, being fishermen. The eucharistic import of the scene is made clear by the bread and fish set on the table before them. Towards these symbols of the Eucharist their arms are stretched out eagerly.

The scene is a historic one, but it is treated with the usual purposeful disregard of historic facts to make plain that it is not presented as history purely, but as a symbol of the Eucharist and in particular of the Eucharistic Repast, Holy Communion.

These seven fishermen, in brief, are the seven Apostles who after fishing all night had caught nothing. Then, on the shore, the Risen Christ appeared to them and bade them cast in the net once more, which they drew out filled with a miraculous draft of fishes. But the incident in this connection which attracted in a most unusual way the attention of the early Christians was that next described by St. John in the following words:

"As soon then as they came to land they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread" (xxi, 9).

What could better answer the demands of the early Christian eucharistic symbolism than this description! But there is more to follow, for as we read on to the end of our passage, we come to the no less pregnant conclusion of the entire account:

"And Jesus cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner" (xxi, 13).

So unanimously did the early Fathers of the Church give a eucharistic application to this incident that Cardinal Pitra, who carefully searched the entire patristic literature of the period, could find no single ancient writer, with the exception of the Pseudo-Athenasius, who failed to interpret this account eucharistically. Not indeed that Christ here consecrated and gave Communion, but that the incident symbolizes the Eucharistic Repast.

So, too, the artist conceives of it. By merely representing the seven Apostles reclining around a eucharistic table, he has eliminated everything from the historic account except its eucharistic import.

The main Actor in the historic scene, Christ Our Lord, might possibly seem to have entirely disappeared from the picture, but this is not so. He is there, in all truth and reality, present, namely, under the symbol of the fish, the Ichthus, whom the entire number of the Faithful, symbolized under the number of the seven Apostles, are here receiving beneath the outward appearance of that bread upon the table.

Thus understood the Biblical story is not disregarded, but takes on a sublime symbolic significance. The eucharistic concept is perfect in every detail.

There is absolutely no mistaking, no misinterpreting that scene. The Christian child who beheld it on those catacomb walls could read it aright.

But St. Augustine found a further symbolism in this Scripture account. Alluding to the fish roasted over the "hot coal" he used these famous words: *Piscis assus, Christus passus.* That is: "The fish broiled is Christ who suffered." In a word, the fish on the table in our eucharistic scene would thus be the symbol of the Ichthus Christ who suffered on the Cross, and now is given us for our food in the Holy Communion.

But let us follow somewhat more closely the interpretation of St. Augustine, which is precisely that of the catacomb painting.

"Christ who suffered," says the great Doctor of the Western Church, "was in reality the fish that was broiled: He is also the bread, 'the bread which came down from heaven.'" And then, coming to the number seven, he gives precisely the catacomb explanation — "We ourselves and all true believers to the end of time are represented by these seven disciples, that so we may understand that we too have a share in so great a Sacrament and are associated in the same happiness" (*In Joan. Ev., Tract.* 123, 2).

With these words before us, from a writer who himself was so closely in contact with the traditions of the early Church and so near to it in time, we can rest assured that nothing has been strained in the interpretation here given to the catacomb pictures.

But among the many eucharistic symbols in that vast "subterranean Rome," there is one more that

we must not overlook, though not found in our Chapel of the Sacraments where we have remained so long.

Reference, it may possibly have been noted, has so far been made to one eucharistic element alone, the bread changed into the Ichthus Christ. That of course suffices to symbolize the Eucharist, and the early Christians fully understood it so. Yet the second element has not been overlooked. We find it in the presentation of the Marriage Feast of Cana as a eucharistic prototype.

The possibility of a comparison between the change of water into wine, which was of course a true transubstantiation, and of the no less complete change of the wine into the Blood of Christ, had not escaped the writers of the first Christian centuries. St. Cyprian in one of his letters (*Ep.* lxiii, 12) and St. Ambrose in his treatise *De Virginibus* called attention to it, while St. Cyril of Jerusalem asks why the eucharistic Transubstantiation should cause difficulty to any one, "since at Cana the Lord changed water into wine, which is akin to blood" (*Cat.* xxii, 2).

The two principal catacomb representations of the Marriage at Cana, used as eucharistic symbols, occur in the Catacomb of Sts. Peter and Marcellin. They are later than the pictures already considered, one dating from the first half of the third century and the other belonging to the next century.

In the latter instance a symbolic picture of the Multiplication of the Loaves is directly connected with the equally symbolic picture of the Marriage

Feast, the two symbols being placed side by side, thus presenting us with both elements, bread and wine, which in the Eucharist are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the Marriage Feast, as there pictured, all the principles of catacomb symbolism are perfectly carried out. The historical details that do not bear upon the symbolic idea are set aside or freely altered to make clear the eucharistic idea only. Yet in such a method, be it understood, there is no deception, no untruth, for it is not a history which the artist here proposes to elucidate, but a true symbolism which he means to point out as really existing in the narrative of the Marriage Feast at Cana. This incident is therefore accurately interpreted under the one single aspect of a Biblical prototype of Holy Communion, precisely as was the Feast of the seven Disciples, studied in the preceding chapter.

The artist is perfectly accurate, for he does not say: "This is the Marriage Feast," but virtually tells us: "This is the Eucharistic Banquet symbolized by the Marriage Feast."

To represent the actual details of the Marriage Feast would be to confuse history with symbolism, and leave nothing definite in the mind of the beholder. History should be absolutely historically accurate, as far as that is possible; and symbolism should be even more exquisitely accurate in pointing out only the symbolical idea underlying the history. That was the principle of the catacomb artist. Let us see how it is minutely observed in this presentation.

We have a tripod table. That would be absurd for a marriage feast, but perfectly expresses the eucharistic symbolism. On it the fish is plainly apparent — hardly a meal for the wedding guests, but it is not meant to be a material meal. It is the Ichthus " Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour," into whom the wine is to be really, truly, substantially converted. This wine is brought by a servant in a glass. We have already seen how in the very earliest eucharistic pictures the wine was shown in a glass, and how St. Jerome speaks of the Precious Blood carried in a glass.

This, therefore, is an ideal and beautiful symbolism. But it is to be made still more perfect, even down to the latest detail, for the number of banqueters is just seven. That is the mystic number representing all the Faithful as partakers at the Eucharistic Feast. And now the final touch — they are apparently all men, so that even in this particular the old tradition of the Communion symbol is observed.

In the other picture of the same subject tradition is less well preserved. Thus, while the usual number seven is maintained, four of the participants are men and three women. That liberty taken with the canons of eucharistic symbolism is of course readily intelligible where there is reference to a marriage feast. But it is also the only departure from the recognized norms. In both cases historic details are otherwise freely set aside to come home to the real truth of the eucharistic symbolism which is the only purpose and subject of the pictures.

Finally, to show how widespread and uniform this eucharistic symbolism was within the Church during those early centuries, let me merely call attention to another famous fresco in an ancient Christian cemetery at Alexandria, far from Rome. In that picture the various ideas here described are combined in a somewhat different form of symbolism. The picture is painted over the altar of a subterranean crypt where the Divine Sacrifice was offered, but its precise date cannot easily be ascertained. It is greatly defaced by time, yet the subjects treated are clearly discernible. Trees are introduced to separate the different symbolic scenes. I shall quote the description given by Northcote and Brownlow in 1869:

" In the middle is Our Blessed Lord, with Peter at His right and Andrew on His left, holding a plate with two fish, whilst several baskets of loaves are on the ground before Him.

" Further to the right is the Miracle of Cana, our Blessed Lady and the servants having legends over their heads — ' Holy Mary ' and ' The Servants.'

" In the corresponding compartment on the other side are a certain number of persons seated at a feast, with a legend over their heads — ' Eating the Benedictions of Christ.' Now the same word which we have here translated ' Benedictions ' [*eulogias*], is the word used by St. Paul when speaking of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. . . . It is the very word always used by St. Cyril of Alexandria, in whose city this painting is found, to denote the Con-

secrated Bread and Wine" ("Roma Sotteranea," 221–2).

The passage in St. Paul to which reference is made above occurs in the clear eucharistic statement which occurs in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, and which is already most familiar to the reader:

"The *chalice of benediction*, which we bless, is it not the *communion* of *the Blood of Christ?* And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?" (x, 16).

Much might still be added here regarding other eucharistic symbols, but enough has been said on the most important eucharistic paintings of the first centuries to reveal to us the full concept of the Eucharist in the early Church as it was presented to the eyes of the first Christians in the visual language of pictorial symbolism.

No reference, it is true, has been made here to the symbolic representation of the Good Shepherd, which under countless aspects meets us everywhere. It is on the ceiling of chapels, on the walls of the subterranean chambers, and even, as Tertullian testifies, on the chalices used in the Holy Mysteries celebrated in that primitive Church. But though intimately connected with the Eucharist and often bearing a eucharistic significance, it is rather the general symbol of the Saviour in His love for His flock, and even for those who have gone astray or have fallen. He is shown bearing on His shoulders not only the lamb, but even the kid He has rescued, that so no one need ever

mistrust His love and forgiveness. That is the pictorial answer given to the heretics who denied God's mercy to the sinner. For such is the tenderness and compassion of the Good Shepherd who so richly feeds us in His eucharistic pastures.

EUCHARISTIC INSCRIPTIONS ON MONUMENTS

WE now come to an entirely new phase of our subject. Not less important than the monuments already described are certain inscriptions which have come down to us from the same early period. Two especially must here be noted. They were discovered in comparatively recent times, and are fascinating examples of the same eucharistic symbolism which we found in the catacombs, but expressed here through the medium of words instead of pictures.

In vain might the pagan reader scan each line and letter of these inscriptions, set up in public places. He could draw from them not one single notion as to the secret safely hidden beneath the strange, elusive, and perhaps highly poetical language, whose beauty he might admire, but whose meaning he could not even surmise.

The first of these inscriptions that naturally suggests itself for discussion here is that on the so-called Stele of Abercius, or in more popular language, on the gravestone containing his epitaph.

Abercius was Bishop of Hierapolis, a city in Phrygia. Living at about the same time as St. Irenaeus,

he was noted like him as a champion of the Faith against heresy. He had travelled far and wide, east and west, in Italy and Mesopotamia, and everywhere, he tells us, found that the Christians partook of exactly the same Eucharistic Food in exactly the same way.

We possess in him therefore the most notable witness to the Catholicity of the Eucharistic Faith in the first ages of the Church. For the Food which everywhere nourished the Faithful was nothing else than what he calls "the Great Ichthus," and therefore truly, really, substantially: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour," the Same whom over all the world His brethren in the Faith receive today.

This fact and many others Abercius set down in his epitaph, which toward the close of his life he composed in verse and ordered to be engraved on the stone which was to mark the resting place of his mortal remains. At the same time he hoped in this manner to bear witness to future ages of the Faith which he professed.

The date of his monument can be definitely fixed for about the year 170, when we know that his death occurred — close, therefore, to the time when Justin suffered martyrdom at Rome. The language of the inscription is Greek. The history itself of its discovery is no less remarkable than everything else connected with it.

Historians had long been aware that certain *Acta* of the life of Abercius had been written, although composed a considerable period after his death. They

were handed down by the ninth-century Byzantine author Symeon Metaphrastes. But while all this time an exact transcript of his epitaph was actually contained in these documents, it was not taken seriously by modern scholars, owing to the unreliable and unhistoric character of the work itself.

Now, it so happened that in 1882 Sir W. Ramsay, during a scientific tour of investigation in Asia, found at Phrygia the gravestone of a certain Alexander. On it were six verses taken from the very epitaph previously disregarded in the fabulous *Acta*. The name Abercius had been taken out of the text, and that of Alexander inserted instead, although it did not fit the meter. Fortunately, this stone bore a definite date, corresponding with the year 216 of our era. The Stele of Abercius, therefore, from which these verses were clearly taken, must have been prior to that date.

It was now, therefore, evident that the epitaph in the *Acta* had really been copied from the tombstone of Abercius, or from some absolutely reliable document. By a further remarkable disposition of Providence Sir W. Ramsay a short time later actually discovered two large fragments of the Stele itself of Abercius.

One of these parts Professor Ramsay presented to the Sultan of Turkey, the other he took back with him to Scotland, where he was faculty member of the University of Aberdeen. Both portions were at last graciously offered to the Pope by their respective possessors and now form one of the most highly

prized treasures in the Lateran Museum of Christian Antiquities.

Abercius begins by telling us that he made his own tomb in his lifetime, and then, in his cryptic and poetical language continues: "Abercius by name, I am a disciple of the holy Shepherd, who feedeth the flocks of His sheep on the hills and plains." The Shepherd, namely, is Christ, whose faithful flocks are everywhere.

But this Shepherd, he adds sent him "to Rome to behold a kingdom and to see the golden-robed, golden-sandaled Queen." The reference here to Rome — which in various readings given for this passage always remains substantially the same — is looked upon as one of the most important allusions to the Primacy of Peter. It was made at almost the same time that Irenaeus, as A. S. Barnes remarks, was insisting that all other churches are bound to agree with Rome because of her *potiorem principalitatem* ("The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments," 100).

To Rome, therefore, Abercius was sent by Christ to behold the seat of His Kingdom on earth, over which He Himself rules invisibly, but where, visible to all, reigns His Holy Bride, the Church, his Mystic Queen. Abercius describes her as clothed in raiment of gold, for so the Psalmist himself had pictured her long before: "The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety" (Ps. xliv, 10). These familiar words were obviously in the mind of Abercius when he wrote his beautiful lines of the

golden-robed, golden-sandaled Queen, the Church of Christ, whose throne, he tells us, is at Rome.

Such was the tribute of this Eastern Bishop to the oneness of the Church and the Primacy of Peter. With that he then proceeds to tell the passer-by of the extent of his travels, which evidenced for him the catholicity of this Church, the unity of her doctrine in all places, and the sameness of the Eucharistic Food which she offers to her children everywhere — nothing less than the Ichthus, Jesus Christ.

I shall take the liberty to quote the eucharistic passage of this document in the translation presented by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a source not connected with Rome. It there reads:

"Faith led me everywhere, and she gave me food in every place — a Fish from the fountain, a mighty Fish and pure, which a holy maiden took in her hands, and this she gave to her friends to eat for ever, having goodly wine and giving it mixed with water, together with bread" ("Christian Inscriptions," 24, 25).

Only familiarity with the catacomb symbolism and with the early Patristic writings will supply us with the golden key that can at once unlock the full eucharistic meaning of this passage.

We recall how in the Chapel of the Sacraments the symbols of Baptism introduced those of the Eucharist. In precisely the same manner Abercius now begins his description of the Eucharist with the baptismal symbol of the "fountain," which alone entitles any one to the reception of the Eucharist.

The Food namely which Abercius received was

"the Fish from the fountain." That Fish was the Ichthus, Jesus Christ, in His Divine and human nature, who is given us in Holy Communion; but only "from the fountain," that is after we have received Holy Baptism.

But the same "mighty Fish and pure," the Divine and Almighty Ichthus, a Maiden takes "in her hands" and gives "to her friends to eat for ever." That Maiden, who takes in her hands Christ in the Eucharist, is the Church, described in the Scriptures as the Bride of Christ, without stain or wrinkle, and "the friends" to whom she gives It are the Faithful alone who belong to her, who have entered the Church through Baptism.

Needless to say, we can apply to Mary also whatever is here said of the Church, as is repeatedly done in similar instances by the Fathers, for whom Mary, no less than the Church, is the Second Eve, the Mother of all who live by grace, as Christ is the Second Adam and the Author of all grace. It is no strained comparison, therefore, if interpreters see also in Mary that Holy Maiden who took in her hands the Fish and gave Him to her friends. This Mary truly did in the Virgin Birth of Christ, when she took up in her immaculate maiden hands the Ichthus Jesus Christ, whom she gave for the redemption of all, and who was to be in time our spiritual Sustenance, our Divine Eucharist. By her He is here bestowed upon her friends, that is, on all who through Baptism belong to her Divine Son, and so belong to her as well in a most special way.

But to explain further under what form this Ich-

thus is bestowed upon us in the Eucharist, Abercius follows the example of the catacomb artists by setting before us the material elements alone that are to be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, describing the Church as " having goodly wine, and giving it mixed with water, together with bread." It is this which Irenaeus calls " the mixed cup " and the bread.

Reference is made to the species alone and not to the Body and Blood of Christ, since it is precisely that Mystery of Faith which must be hidden alike from the curious and the profane. In exactly the same way the catacomb symbols merely combine the Ichthus with the bread and wine. To the Christian it implies at once Transubstantiation. To the pagan it is just fish and bread and wine — and so he passes on.

Nothing, therefore, could be more exact and theologically accurate in every detail than this inscription of Abercius, tallying most perfectly in all its use of symbolism with the catacomb monuments. It speaks, indeed, a clear and lucid language, but intelligible to the initiated only, the " little fish " drawn from those waters of Baptism in which we all have been begotten, who hope to be daily conformed more and more to the likeness of our great Ichthus, Jesus Christ, through our constant reception of Him in Holy Communion.

Less probably than a century after Abercius had written his epitaph in Asia, another Christian in the far distant province of Gaul, as remote from the Phrygia of the Orient as East is from West, expressed in his own epitaph the same thoughts under exactly

the same figures, showing how universal even this very language itself of eucharistic symbolism was. Thus reads the Epitaph of Pectorius, found at Autun, in the year 1839.

"Divine offspring of the heavenly Fish, preserve a reverent mind when thou drinkest of the immortal fountain that springs up among mortals. Let thy soul be comforted, friend, with the ever-flowing fountains of wealth-giving wisdom.

"Take the honey-sweet Food of the Saviour of saints and eat it hungrily, holding the Fish in thy hands.

"Feed me with the Fish, I pray Thee, my Lord and Saviour."

Then, after briefly referring to his parents, the writer concludes with the petition that father, mother and brethren be mindful of their Pectorius, "abiding in the peace of the Fish."

Beautifully Pectorius addresses the Christian reader of his Epitaph as the "Divine offspring of the heavenly Fish," since by Baptism we are all begotten in our Ichthus, Jesus Christ, made like to Him, partakers of the Divine nature, and so in all truth and reality the Divine offspring of the celestial Saviour. "Ye are gods," as the Scripture already quoted so strongly expresses this thought. Again the theology of Pectorius, like that of Abercius, is sublimely exalted and scrupulously accurate.

The "immortal fountain" is that which in the Chapel of the Sacraments we saw gushing forth from the rock struck by the rod of Moses, and this great

leader of Israel, as we saw, is himself taken in the catacomb art for a symbol of Peter. We are, therefore, exhorted by Pectorius to drink to the utmost of the graces which have first been opened for us in the Church through Holy Baptism, the true waters of sacramental grace, which Peter has the authority to draw forth and communicate to all the Faithful. Hence the frequent presentation of Peter as the " leader of the New Israel " in this catacomb symbol of the Striking of the Rock, to which Pectorius alludes.

The waters here spoken of by him are not merely those of Baptism, but also the sacramental and other graces that follow upon it in the Church, becoming thus in all truth " the overflowing fountains of wealth-giving wisdom."

Now Christ Himself is the Incarnate Wisdom, and so from Baptism and the graces which have followed upon it in overflowing wealth, we turn to the honey-sweet Food of the Saviour of Saints, which is nothing else than the Eucharist.

But the allusion to the Eucharistic Food becomes unmistakably clear when Pectorius counsels his friend to " eat it hungrily, holding the Fish in thy hands." Just so, as has here been shown repeatedly, the Eucharist was received in Holy Communion by the early Christians, who were given the Sacred Body of the Lord to hold in their hands, and then communicate themselves with it, partaking of it " hungrily," that is with intense fervor the spiritual longing.

In a word, the last wish of Pectorius is the last and

best wish which any good Christian can express today urging those who are dear to him to partake freely and "with a reverent mind," of all the graces the Church makes accessible to them, but in particular to receive the Holy Eucharist as frequently and fervently as may at all be possible to them, since here is truly their greatest happiness and treasure upon earth, as also their pledge of immortal life. All this precisely Pectorius tells us in his beautiful symbolic language, composed as his eyes were looking forward to the joys of his Eternal Communion with Christ. So with Pectorius may we too hope at length to abide forever in the peace of our Ichthus, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

The Eucharist through the Ages

ORIGIN OF OUR VARIOUS EUCHARISTIC LITURGIES

IN one of the famous medieval romances we find the Grail represented as a precious stone, brought down by Angels from Heaven, and possessed of the most marvelous qualities, life-giving and youth-preserving. It is confided to the care of a Grail guardian. Doubtless we have here at least the suggestion of a modern eucharistic symbolism.

It will not seem strange, then, or novel, if we consider now the essentials of the Eucharistic Rite, as instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, under the figure of a Jewel, infinite in value, coming to us from Christ Himself, through the hands of His Apostles, and entrusted to the ever watchful guardianship of the Church.

But a Jewel of such priceless worth called for a setting, made indeed by the hand of man, yet not without Divine guidance. With the nature of that setting, as it actually came to us from the Apostles, we have already been rendered acquainted.

It consisted, if I may so speak, of an inner and outer portion. The former, with the Jewel it enclosed, was

the Mass proper, or Mass of the Faithful. The latter was the Christianized synagogue service, or Mass of the Catechumens, which now we call the Prologue or Introduction. From the same source may also have been derived the blessing at the end of our Mass today.

In every rite that has come down to us through the centuries, this twofold setting is preserved, with the distinction between the parts perfectly plain, and their jointure, as we may say, clearly marked.

In all this may we recognize but another beautiful illustration of the divinely planned continuity between the Old and the New Testament, which are both combined in the Mass, as they are also in another way preserved together in our Bible. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil. In the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in which all the Sacrifices of the Old Law have their fulfilment, we behold Synagogue and Church in their true relations to one another: the former supplying the preparation for the Mystery of Faith, which the latter reverently surrounds with her own special ceremonials.

Not only is this distinction preserved in every rite that has come down to us, but each portion of our twofold setting has retained substantially all its characteristics. This statement stands unchallenged on the part of our great liturgical authorities. It is true both of the Eastern Liturgy and the Western Mass.

The first, or Christianized-synagogue portion of the Mass, consists today, as in the Apostolic Age it-

self, of prayers, psalms, lessons from the Scriptures, and finally the homily or sermon. The psalms (or what is left to represent them) occupy precisely the same position now as then. The singing, too, of psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles continues to hold its place.

The second, or purely New Testament part, consisted in the first century as in our own of Offertory, Thanksgiving, Reference to the Last Supper, words of Consecration, Intercessions, Breaking of the Bread, and Communion. I do not mention the *Anamnesis* nor the *Epiklesis*, although both of these were certainly in use during the first centuries, while still other and minor parts of our liturgy might be instanced as then in use. The Blessing at the end can be regarded, I have just suggested, as a survival of the blessing typical in both the synagogue and Temple services of the Old Testament. We may therefore consider it as part of the outer setting which thus encloses our Jewel.

What I have here enumerated is not, then, the invention of the Middle Ages, as some might have imagined, but each of the main features described can be found definitely mentioned in the Gospels, Epistles and Acts of the Apostles. Included as they were in the various devotions of the first Christians, all these features can be regarded as combined in the great central act of Apostolic worship, the Eucharistic Service.

Sufficient evidence, therefore, is supplied us as to the constitution of the so-called Primitive Rite and

its substantial agreement with our present-day Mass or Liturgy. Lesser details, too, there are to which I have not called attention. Such are the Kiss of Peace, which was everywhere observed and continues today in our Solemn Mass, the prayers said standing and with extended arms, as the priest still recites them today, and many other similar heritages from Apostolic days.

Numerous allusions and references to the Mass, found in the writers of the first three centuries, often most remotely separate from each other and scattered over the then-known earth, show the absolute uniformity of type in the Primitive Rite everywhere. That uniformity is equally made evident in the apocryphal Syrian *Testamentum Domini* and the Egyptian Church Orders, or earliest written Liturgies, which all agree with that most complete of early liturgical works, the Apostolic Constitutions, composed in Syria, and reasonably believed to approach in its general tone and type most closely to the ritual of the Apostolic Rite.

The remarkable uniformity in type of that Primitive Rite, as observed throughout the first centuries, is perhaps most strikingly evidenced in the conviction expressed by the second-century Fathers, that, namely, Christ Himself had personally instructed His Apostles in regard to that entire portion of the Mass which in the early Church was known as the Eucharistic Prayer, but in the Eastern Church today corresponds to the *Anaphora,* and in the Western to the Preface and Canon combined.

Even in the first century St. Clement of Rome, writing only thirty years after the death of Sts. Peter and Paul, alludes to similar traditions. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, an official document from the See of St. Peter, which we have seen was read for centuries in the churches, he expressly stated that the general ordering of the Divine worship in the Church had been definitely prescribed by Our Lord in person: He wrote:

" We must do all the things that the Lord told us to do at stated times, in proper order. For He commanded that the offerings and services ['liturgies'] should be performed not rashly nor in disorder, but at fixed times and hours. And He Himself by His most high will arranged where and by whom they should be celebrated, so that everything should be done piously *according to His command*" (xl, 1–3).

The Scripture itself tells us that during the period immediately following Christ's Resurrection, Our Divine Lord showed Himself alive to His Apostles " by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1, 3). That Kingdom of God is, of course, His Holy Church.

It was not necessarily the plan of Divine Wisdom that all the things then made known or the instructions given should be set down in writing. It was sufficient that the Church possessed the twofold function of safeguarding both the written word and the Apostolic Tradition. How far Christ may at that time have instructed His Apostles in the details of the Eu-

charistic Service we do not know, but there is no improbability that instructions may have been given them by Our Lord on this point. Such, seemingly, was the universal belief of the Early Church. Even at a much later period St. Jerome still refers to Christ having instructed His Apostles that "daily in the Sacrifice of His Body the Faithful may dare to say, 'Our Father, etc.'" (*Adv. Pelag.* iii, 15). It all shows the persistence of these traditions.

It certainly would most perfectly account for the almost incredible uniformity of type in the Primitive Rite, unless indeed the Apostles themselves should have come to an agreement under the direction of St. Peter. Else each Apostle might have initiated his own rite, embodying the essentials prescribed by Christ at the Last Supper.

That the Mass of the Apostles would be faithfully copied by their successors was sufficiently clear. Christ had made known to the Apostles, St. Clement writes in the Epistle referred to — and let us remember that he lived in the days of the Apostles — that contentions would arise regarding the episcopal office. In view of this foreknowledge, St. Clement continues, the Apostles "appointed the above-mentioned bishops and provided for the future by establishing a rule of succession according to which well-tried men should succeed them in their office after their death."

The point here is that these "well-tried" men would have been intimately associated with the Apostles, and so would naturally have closely imitated them in their manner of performing the most sacred

episcopal function, the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

So it was possible to secure that sameness of type which we know characterized the early Masses.

We must remember that aside from the Psalms, the Our Father and the essentials of the words of Consecration, all the prayers at first were necessarily improvised in the Masses of the Apostles, so far as their wording was concerned. All the minor actions, too, were performed merely as need demanded. Yet constant repetition soon enough brought about not only uniformity of theme in the prayers, but also of thought, and a more and more definite sameness of expression, out of which in course of time fixed formulae arose.

In the same manner also the habitual actions changed into fixed ceremonies that would not be varied thereafter. Thus the fluid Mass of the first centuries, as Adrian Fortescue loves to express it, was definitely crystallized.

In the fourth century we suddenly discover that this development had taken place, and what is more, that the process of crystallization had ultimately left three distinct rites, representing respectively the Eucharistic Service as performed in the three great patriarchal centers of Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. A century later, a fourth distinctive rite had been added. It then, at all events, comes to our notice with sufficient definiteness, as having arisen in Gaul and Northwestern Europe.

Here, therefore, we have the four parent rites

from which all others were later to be derived. They are known respectively as the Syrian or Antiochene, the Alexandrian, Roman and Gallican.

Yet while distinct in details, all these rites unquestionably showed their common origin from the same Primitive Apostolic Rite. What in fact was remarkable was not at all their diversity, which had to be expected, but their substantial sameness in outline and in all their main features, no less than in the essentials of the Mass, that never can be changed. Well could it be said of these sister rites:

Facies non omnibus una, nec diversa tamen.

While their faces were not entirely of one mold, neither were they different. That statement, applied to them by Duchesne, perfectly summarizes the diversity in minor details, and yet the general sameness of characteristics in all these rites. Through all of them the parent features could be distinctly traced.

The origin of these different liturgies from the Primitive Rite of the Apostolic Age can also be easily accounted for. The Rite continued more or less fluid within definite outlines, during the first two centuries. In the meantime minor peculiarities naturally arose in different localities. As more attention came to be paid to these divergencies in the subsequent century, it came about no less naturally that the customs of the great patriarchal centers gradually imposed themselves upon the various churches within their patriarchates. Thus the first rites arose, the parent rites of

all others that would develop in future ages, as they themselves had been derived from the Rite of the Apostles.

The specific peculiarities of each rite were due to such minor factors as difference in stress or in the arrangement of the various parts. Thus certain prayers would be lengthened in one locality, but shortened in another. Ceremonies developed with imposing magnificence in one patriarchate, might be given no more than the necessary attention in another. In particular the Eastern fondness for rhetorical expansion and richness of expression would inevitably come into contrast with the greater terseness of the West. This took place as soon as the Mass was translated at Rome from its original Greek text into Latin. The process of rendition, resulted largely in a new adaptation. By about the latter half of the third century Latin had become the dominant liturgical language at Rome. The reason was that Greek had then ceased to be the ordinary language of intercourse among the Christians there.

The Roman rite, unlike that of Antioch and Alexandria, had not definitely spread throughout its entire patriarchate. In Northern Italy its natural place was taken by the Gallican, with Milan as its local center. Soon, however, without any particular striving on the part of Rome, a process of unification started which finally made the Roman rite generally accepted throughout the West.

As difficulties, namely, arose, from time to time in liturgical questions, Bishops of the Gallican rite would

refer them to the Holy See. The latter had but one way of solving them. This consisted in sending its own Sacramentary to show what was done at Rome. Missionaries going out from Rome also brought with them into foreign countries the Roman rite.

Doubtless, in various other ways as well, the Galasian Sacramentary, which then represented the Roman rite, reached Gaul, at about the sixth century. But the ultimate concerted efforts at unification came rather from the desire of Gaul to introduce the Roman rite, as a way out of the difficulties, than from any systematic plans furthered by Rome itself. The differences were after all but unessential details.

Set efforts at unification were finally made, and they came not from the Pope but from the Carlovingian monarchs. These were anxious to end confusion by promoting and even imposing the acceptance of the Roman rite throughout their dominion. What had happened at Antioch and Alexandria now repeated itself here. Magnificently solemnized in the great center of Frankish power, the Roman rite was readily taken up throughout the Frankish domain, aside even from the consideration of the royal good pleasure.

In that process, however, a certain transfusion from the Gallican into the Roman rite occurred. Although adopting the Roman Liturgy, bishops or others retained various favorite features from their previous rite, nor was that method considered unlawful. Hence in the time of such rulers as Pepin, Charlemagne, and

Louis the Pious, a composite liturgy arose, which was not merely spread through the Frankish Empire, but returned to Rome itself, there to replace entirely the old original Roman rite, of which not a single book is in existence today.

Yet the actual Roman rite, as we possess it at present, may be said to have really lost nothing of its primitive ritual. It merely assimilated, *in addition*, numerous Gallican elements which now are an integral part of the liturgy of the Roman Mass.

As the Roman rite, thus modified, became practically the universal rite of the West, a similar unification took place at a later period in the East. The many daughter rites that sprang from the two original Eastern rites, the Syrian and Alexandrian, were gradually more or less absorbed by the rite of Constantinople, which today holds a position in the East similar to that of the Roman rite in the West. Under the Divine Providence we have thus again been gradually closing the circle which opened with the four parent rites of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Yet during all these liturgical changes which took place over the entire earth — however striking some of them might appear because of the pomp and circumstance attending them — the essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice never varied, the outline of its liturgy never changed, its general development still remained the same as we found it in the Primitive Rite, the Mass of the Apostles.

In a word, the Jewel itself, representing all the essentials of the Rite Christ instituted at the Last

Supper, had remained unaltered. On it were graven deeply the words of Christ: "Do this."

But the twofold setting, too, had been preserved, hardly less faithfully, in all its general outline and characteristics. In spite of innumerable changes, in different lands and times, the old Primal Rite was never lost, but continued discernible beneath every minor and purely superficial variation. However much such changes might impress the imagination, they were but traceries, wrought and rewrought, across the surface of our setting that remained forever permanent.

Magnificent episcopal entrances or processions, transposition of the Offertory to the beginning of the Liturgy, the drawing of a veil to hide the Sanctuary during the Consecration, an elevation of both Consecrated Species separately or conjointly — these and similar changes that in course of time were introduced, must forcibly strike the observer. Yet in reality they concern only the most unessential details. In their bearing on the vital elements of the Eucharistic Liturgy they are insignificant, leaving untouched the substance both of the preparatory portion and of the Mass Proper.

Thus, securely placed in the care of the Church, the Jewel of the Mass has been preserved inviolate through all the centuries, its inner and the outer setting both intact, though East and West have spun across them their golden traceries. Yet underneath all changes, clearly discernible, stands out boldly the old original outline of the Mass of the Apostles.

Today there is but little further change. The unalterable Jewel, with its authentic setting, still retains its ancient beauty. Through two thousand years it has come down to us inviolate from the hands of the Apostles, our richest heritage.

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Husslein, Joseph, S.J.
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Mass of the Apostles, The
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